

THE ABOLITIONISTS AMONG THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

The major social controversy of the mid-nineteenth century in America was concerned with Negro slavery. It is well known that the abolition movement caused division among most of the major religious denominations which had membership in both the North and the South. The accepted view among the historians of the Disciples of Christ has been that division did not occur. There has been a tendency to believe that abolitionist activities among the Disciples played a very minor part in their denominational life, and were of no great problem to the brotherhood in general. It is the purpose of this study to examine the abolitionists among the Disciples, to ascertain what they thought about slavery, to discover how extensive their controversy was with the rest of the brotherhood, to determine how much influence they exerted, and to decide whether or not there was division among the Disciples on this issue.

That this area has been neglected can be seen by a survey of the literature on the Disciples. When we consider the results of abolitionism among the other denominations which existed in the same area as the Disciples, particularly the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, and when we recall the failure to study this problem among the Disciples, we can question whether the past historians have overlooked or misinterpreted what was happening among the brotherhood in this area. An

alternative answer could be that the Disciples were unique in their ability to avoid entanglement in social problems. If the latter is the case, then the reasons for their uniqueness need to be fully explored.

That the Disciples did have abolitionist members who were active in promoting abolitionism, is not denied by the Disciple historians, past and present, but the abolitionists are generally ignored in the discussion of this period of Disciple history. The history of any group which ignores the actions and reactions of the members to the most important social and political question of the period, is incomplete. This study attempts to fill the gap which exists concerning this important period and problem in the history of the Disciples.

In dealing with this problem, and in the case of nearly any study of the Disciples during the period between 1830 and 1860, one is forced to rely primarily on the discussion which occurred in the periodicals of the group. These periodicals were many and varied. Most did not survive long, but a few did manage to find support for several years. Except for these periodicals, there exists very little material from which to draw information. There are almost no letters from the major leaders on either side of this controversy known to exist in manuscript. The abolitionist newspapers, The Liberty Herald and Anti-Slavery Bugle, offer some criticism of the Disciples' stand on slavery and abolition. At present, the materials are limited mostly to printed sources.

The Disciples' problems over the issue of slavery and abolition are similar to those of the Baptists. Freedom of interpretation of the Bible led to many views on what the Bible had to say. The conflict developed as more and more Disciples began to hold that slavery was a sin. The major leaders, Alexander and Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Warren Stone, and David S. Burnet, did not find the Bible asserting that slavery was a sin.

The significance of the Bible and the question of Biblical interpretation are important to this study. In the early days of the Disciples, in fact, before the denomination was established, the early leaders felt that union of the church could be achieved by elimination of human creed, and the acceptance of the Bible alone as the rule of faith and order. Barton Warren Stone, the leader of the movement in Kentucky, expressed this in the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," which he helped to write, and Thomas Campbell expressed the same idea in "The Declaration and Address," of the Christian Association of Washington County, Pennsylvania. Important here are the words in the fifth section of "The Declaration and Address:"

That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, where the scriptures are silent . . . no human authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed

deficiency Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church; or be made a term of communion amongst Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.¹

It is in this principle of the Disciples that much of the controversy centered. Was slavery condemned in the New Testament? Was it a sin?

As we shall see, one group held that slavery was a matter on which the Bible was silent so far as slavery being a sin was concerned; for the other, the New Testament was plain in its teaching that slavery was a sin.

The method used in the following discussion has been to examine the available writings of the leading men involved in the controversy to determine their thinking, and proposed action. The study begins by looking at the general condition and thinking concerning the Negro in the West during this period. The background for this study will conclude with a presentation of the views on slavery of the men considered to be the major leaders.

Basic to the treatment of any issue among the Disciples during this period is a review of what Alexander Campbell had to say on it, since he influenced the thinking of a large number of Disciples. In examining his thought, we shall make extensive use of his writings in The Millennial Harbinger² because they became the objects of attack in the arguments of the abolitionists.

¹ Lester G. McAllister, Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 118-119.

² Throughout the rest of this study The Millennial Harbinger will be referred to simply as the Harbinger.

Jonas Hartzel,³ one of the leading abolitionist Disciples, developed his abolition writings, most of which appeared in John Boggs' The North-Western Christian Magazine⁴ and The Christian Luminary, as an answer to Campbell's views on slavery.

Hartzel's views, which oppose those of Campbell, and which appeared in his debates and discussions with other people, will be examined next. These will be followed by his interpretation of the Bible on slavery. In this he answered Campbell's view that the Bible sanctioned slavery. Finally, his answer to those he called the slavery apologists will be treated.

John Boggs, whose views will be considered following those of Hartzel, was the editor of the two abolitionist periodicals published for the Disciples. Because of his prominent position as an editor, his views are important. The ideas on abolition expressed by two less known abolitionists, one who is actually unknown by name, the other, B. U. Watkins, will also be examined.

While the abolitionists and their opponents were exchanging views in the press, abolition was contributing to several other controversies which indicate something of the depth of feeling that developed

³ Jonas Hartzel sometimes spelled his last name Hartzell. The spelling with only one "l" will be followed here.

⁴ The North-Western Christian Magazine will also be referred to simply as the Magazine in the remainder of this study.

over the issue. These controversies in which abolition and slavery were major factors were: support for missionaries; and actions of college students, both of which created much hard feeling.

Finally, the matter of whether the Disciples did or did not divide will be considered. This discussion will center around the formation of the Christian Missionary Society. In discussing division we need to look at Disciple organization. During the period of Disciple history considered here, denominational organization as it is now known, did not exist. The organization which gave unity to the Disciples was the American Christian Missionary Society. In speaking of division, we refer to separation from this organization. This denominational structure is similar to that of the Baptist organization in 1845, when division occurred in that group.

In the progress of this study, it was found that the alternative answer mentioned above, namely, that the Disciples were unique, does not correspond to the facts. The Disciples had the usual problems which faced the denominations of the time, and they did not differ from their neighbors in their interest in social problems and controversies of the period.

In the conclusions it will be shown that the Disciple abolitionists did consider that division occurred between them and the rest of the brotherhood. This division occurred not only in disfellowship with slaveholders by local churches, but also in the spirit of disunity because

of Biblical interpretation, which in turn led to a division over missionary support. With the organization of a separate missionary society by the abolitionist Disciples, division became a fact. This event the historians of the past have generally failed to recognize or admit.

At this point a survey of what past writers on Disciple history have said on this issue might prove helpful. The Disciples have published histories of their denomination every few years since the 1860's.

The first book which covered this period is Robert Richardson's Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, published first in 1869-70. In this work Richardson discusses slavery in several places. The first reference is to Thomas Campbell's reaction to the institution in Kentucky, where he found Negro education forbidden. The second is to Barton Warren Stone's reaction to the inhuman treatment of the slaves in the deep South. Stone had observed this treatment while on a tour of the South for the Presbyterians before he became a Disciple.⁵

Richardson presented Alexander Campbell's feelings on the Southampton insurrection and his proposed solution to the problem.⁶ He pointed out that Campbell expressed himself because he felt that

⁵Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), I, 494, 497; II, 189.

⁶ Ibid., II, 366.

it was his duty as a citizen; Christian obligation was not asserted and Campbell made a distinction between the two. After a trip to Charleston, South Carolina, Campbell expressed the opinion that slavery was economically unsound.⁷ Richardson indicated Campbell's belief that the Bible did not condemn the relation of master and slave; consequently, Campbell did not feel that he could condemn it on religious grounds. Slavery was a non-religious matter and, thus, not open to discussion in the church.⁸ Richardson also related the problem Campbell had over his slavery views in Scotland while he was on a tour there.⁹ Of the prominent abolitionists among the Disciples, he mentions only one, Jonas Hartzel, and then not in connection with his abolitionism.¹⁰

There were at least two books published near the end of the nineteenth century which also fail to mention the abolitionists or slavery. One of these was William Thomas Moore's Life of Timothy Coop. Timothy Coop was instrumental in getting Campbell to go to Europe in 1847. This book on his life does not mention the controversy over slavery in which Campbell became involved while in Scotland.¹¹

The second book appeared in 1894 by B. B. Tyler.¹² This

⁷Ibid., II, 450. ⁸Ibid., II, 531ff. ⁹Ibid., II, 530-534. ¹⁰Ibid., II, 253, 631.

¹¹ William Thomas Moore, Life of Timothy Coop (Cincinnati: Standard, 1889).

¹² B. B. Tyler, History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Christian Literature, 1894).

volume makes no mention of slavery and the issues involved with it. There is no mention of John Boggs, Pardee Butler, or other prominent abolitionists. Its list of colleges omits the strongly abolitionist North Western Christian University (now known as Butler University). Thomas William Grafton's Men of Yesterday, a book made up of a series of short biographies of leading men in the Disciple movement, also omits the abolitionist leaders.¹³

Grafton also published a book on the life of Alexander Campbell.¹⁴ In this book he does deal with slavery as it related to Campbell. He noted that during Campbell's tour of the South he became personally aware of the evils of American slavery. Grafton also discusses Campbell's controversy in Scotland over slavery and abolition.

James Harvey Garrison edited The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century, a book made up of chapters on various subjects dealing with the history of the Disciples written by various men. The section dealing with the Civil War period was by William Thomas Moore. Moore maintains that no division took place over the issues of that period. As was the case with the works already mentioned, there is no reference

¹³ Thomas William Grafton, Men of Yesterday (St. Louis: Christian, 1889).

¹⁴ Thomas William Grafton, Alexander Campbell Leader of the Great Reformation of the 19th Century (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1897).

to abolitionism or abolitionists in the Disciple brotherhood. Moore does not discuss the events leading to the war, but rather starts with the war itself.¹⁵

Following the turn of the century, Errett Gates published a history of the Disciples called, The Story of Churches, the Disciples of Christ. Gates does bring in the subject of slavery and the issues of the Civil War. He stresses the fact that Campbell was anti-slavery and was opposed to abolitionism at the same time. He also asserts that no division took place over the matter. However, he says nothing about the Christian Missionary Society, the Magazine, or any of the abolitionists.¹⁶

The first detailed history of the Disciples, extending to 830 pages, was W. T. Moore's A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ. Although he does not discuss the slavery problem as a separate matter, he does indicate that it caused trouble. He points out the problem it created at the organization of the Ohio Christian Missionary Society. John Kirk of Youngstown, and Charles Brown of Bloomfield, both abolitionists, objected to the organization supporting a slaveholder, Dr. James Barclay, the Disciples' missionary to Jerusalem. Moore

¹⁵ James Harvey Garrison (ed.), The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century (St. Louis: Christian, 1901).

¹⁶ Errett Gates, The Story of the Churches, the Disciples of Christ (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1905).

does not mention Pardee Butler and the refusal of the American Christian Missionary Society to support him, nor does he mention the Magazine or other abolition activities.¹⁷

In 1924 B. A. Abbott brought out a small book called The Disciples -- An Interpretation, which has a section dealing with history. He does not mention slavery or hint that any controversy arose over it.¹⁸

Walter Wilson Jennings admitted that "one of the most important economic and political problems of the early period was the question of slavery."¹⁹ He also says that the Disciples were divided on the matter according to the area where they lived. He feels that the polity of the denomination prevented any general separation, but he does state that local divisions did take place. Jennings is the first to admit any kind of division over the slavery issues. He gives no information about these local divisions, nor does he mention any of the known abolitionists, such as Boggs and Hartzel, nor the abolitionist publications.

The latest general history of the Disciples is Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGrott's, The Disciples of Christ, A History, published in 1948. They discuss the slavery issue and stress

¹⁷ William Thomas Moore, A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1909).

¹⁸ B. A. Abbott, The Disciples -- An Interpretation (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1924).

¹⁹ Walter Wilson Jennings, Origin and Early History of the Disciples of Christ (Cincinnati: Standard, 1919), 314.

that there was no division over it. They summarize Campbell's position as follows:

Briefly put, Mr. Campbell's position was: (a) Slavery is not condemned in the Bible; therefore slavery is a matter of opinion, not of faith, and slaveholders as such should not be excluded from the church. (b) Slavery, in practice, is economically and morally dangerous; therefore, Christians may properly oppose it. (c) Christianity is more important than political agreement. Both Campbell and Stone freed their own slaves, but for many years they served churches without any condemnation of slaveholding.²⁰

They point out that Walter Scott took about the same position as Campbell.²¹

Although they mention the Magazine was abolitionist, it is not listed among the periodicals discussed in a section of journalism.²² The dissension caused by the Magazine, The Christian Luminary, and the Christian Missionary Society are limited to about half a page, which includes Pardee Butler's problems with the American Christian Missionary Society.²³

Already mentioned are three books dealing with biography. There are several others which should be discussed. David Purviance, an early Ohio Disciple, published in 1845 his autobiography, in which

²⁰ Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A. History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 331.

²¹ Ibid., 229. ²² Ibid., 253-256. ²³ Ibid., 332.

he discussed the relationship he had with the slavery problem and indicated his opposition to slavery. This book was written and published before the controversy became acute.²⁴

One of the better biographies written in the nineteenth century about a Disciple is J. S. Lamar's Memoirs of Isaac Errett with Selections from His Writings. Errett was at one time a minister on the Reserve at Warren, and opposed Campbell's stand on slavery at times. Lamar devotes some space to the controversy where it involved Errett. He gives several pages to the controversy at the time of the founding of the Ohio Christian Missionary Society.²⁵

During the 1950's four biographies were published which are important. Noel L. Keith's The Story of D.S. Burnet is the only study on this important Disciple leader. Slavery is mentioned in connection with the Disciple movement in general, but Burnet's own views are not given much attention. One section is devoted to his efforts to send a former slave to Liberia as a missionary.²⁶ As was the case with many

²⁴ David Purviance, The Biography of Elder David Purviance (Dayton: B. F. and G. W. Elis, 1848), 93-97.

²⁵ James S. Lamar, Memoirs of Issac Errett with Selections from His Writings (Cincinnati: Standard, 1898) I, 133-137.

²⁶ Noel L. Keith, The Story of D.S. Burnet: Undeserved Obscurity (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 149-151.

of the Disciples, he favored the American Colonization Society.²⁷

The only modern study of Thomas Campbell is Lester G. McAllister's Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book. Thomas Campbell's views on slavery are discussed, as are the problems he had with it in Kentucky, near the end of the book.²⁸

Two works which limit themselves to certain aspects of Alexander Campbell's life and thought are Harold L. Lunger's The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell, and D. Ray Lindley's Apostle of Freedom. The first of these is a study of Campbell's political views. Since Campbell thought slavery was a political matter, this book contains one of the best discussions of Campbell's views on slavery.²⁹ The second is a study of Campbell's views on church government. Lindley takes the position that no division over slavery occurred. He does not mention the abolitionists' Christian Missionary Society, or any of the active abolitionists.³⁰

²⁷ His Uncle Jacob Burney, Ohio Supreme Court Justice, was a leader of the movement in Ohio. See P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 138-140.

²⁸ McAllister, op. cit., 252-254.

²⁹ Harold L. Lunger, The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954) 193-232.

³⁰ D. Ray Lindley, Apostle of Freedom (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), 98-104 et passim.

Barton Warren Stone, the leader in Kentucky, has been the subject of a recent study by William Garrett West, Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity. West points out that although Stone opposed slavery he did not write much on the subject himself. In his periodical he reproduced what others had said which reflected his thinking. West devoted two footnotes to the discussion of slavery.³¹

Two books have been published on the history of the Disciples in Ohio. The first by A. S. Hayden, A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve, was limited to the northeastern section of the state. Hayden ignores the slavery discussion, although many Disciples in this section were abolitionists.³² The second by Henry K. Shaw, Buckeye Disciples, does recognize that slavery created coolness between Campbell and the Disciples on the Western Reserve.³³ Shaw denies that division occurred.³⁴

Shaw has recently published a history of the Disciples in Indiana. He devotes more space to the slavery issue and Civil War than previous writers. In his discussion, Shaw is concerned with the Christian

³¹ William Garrett West, Barton Warren Stone (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), 17, 189.

³² Amos Sutton Hayden, A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875).

³³ Henry K. Shaw, Buckeye Disciples (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1952), 140-146.

³⁴ Ibid., 194.

Missionary Society, and includes a discussion of the major abolitionist leaders, but he does not admit that division did in fact occur.³⁵

That division did take place among the Disciples and that slavery played a part in it is suggested in an article and book by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. He mentions slavery as one of the early issues of division and says that separation occurred between the radical abolitionists and the rest of the brotherhood with the formation of the Christian Missionary Society in 1859.³⁶

It can be seen from this survey that the historians of the Disciples of Christ have tended to avoid the issue of slavery, or have tried to de-emphasize the role it played in the Disciple movement. Although some in the past have indicated that the discussion was sharp, some nearer the present time still consider the issue unimportant. Harrell is the first to suggest that division did occur and that the issue played an important part.

The materials for this study have come from several libraries. The most important of these have been the Disciples of Christ Historical Society's library, Nashville, Tennessee; The Western Reserve

³⁵ Henry K. Shaw, Hoosier Disciples (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1966), 155-192.

³⁶ David Edwin Harrell, Jr. "The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ, "The Journal of Southern History, XXX (August 1964), 261-277; and his Quest for a Christian America (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 134-138.

Historical Society's library, Cleveland, Ohio; The Lexington Theological Seminary's library, Lexington, Kentucky; and the American Baptist Historical Society's library, Rochester, New York. Other materials were used from other libraries through inter-library loan.

There are always many people who make valuable contributions to a project such as this, in addition to the author. The committee which directed the study, consisted of Dr. Leland H. Carlson, chairman, Dr. Robert Ferm, and Mr. Donald Reisinger. Dr. Carlson, whose patience exceeds that of Job, gave assistance of indescribable value. Dr. Sidney E. Mead suggested the topic for this study and offered valuable aid in the earlier stages of the project. Dr. Mary Agnes Smith, read the manuscript in an early form and made suggestions on location of material as well as on the improvement of the text. My wife, Lillian D. Eminhizer, rendered assistance in copying material used in the study at various libraries, and my mother, Mrs. Mary E. Eminhizer, proof-read the last drafts of the manuscript. Several librarians have offered suggestions and given aid beyond their normal obligations and deserve recognition. Dr. Willis R. Jones, Mr. Marrvin D. Williams, and Mr. Ben R. Biddy who did a complete evaluation of the project in terms of the material which would contribute to it in the Disciples of Christ Historical Society's library. Mrs. Alene Lowe White and Mrs. Virginia R. Hawley of the Western Reserve Historical Society's library staff gave much assistance in locating material and information about particular individuals.

CHAPTER I

WESTERN ATTITUDES TOWARD
THE NEGRO, ABOLITION, AND SLAVERY

As the Civil War approached, the problem of the Negro and slavery in America became more important. Although anti-slavery sentiments were strong, it does not appear that the majority of the people of the Old Northwest were ever anti-slavery. Generally they opposed both the expansion of slavery and the attacks by the abolitionists on it. Many were concerned with the Negro in varying degrees, both in their own neighbourhood and in distant places. This concern motivated activity according to the attitude taken by the person.

Alice Dana Adams, who made a study of the anti-slavery movement, saw six directions which anti-slavery action took in the period between 1800 and 1830. One was pressure to enforce the anti-slave trade laws. Another was a move to stop interstate slave trade. A third alternative was opposition to further territorial extension of slavery. There was also the successful prevention of the extension of slavery into the Northwest Territory and the states made from it. Another alternative was the desire to limit it where it was legal, such as in Washington, D.C. Finally

there was opposition to the fugitive slave laws.¹

The area north of the Ohio River became a haven for Southerners who wanted to free their slaves, or who wanted to live in an area where slavery did not exist.² In 1796, William Dunlop became one of the earliest slaveholders to move from Kentucky so that he could free his slaves. Dr. Alexander Campbell³ moved to Ohio in 1803, from Kentucky, for the same purpose. Following his move to Ohio Dr. Campbell began to advocate immediate abolition.⁴ At this time his sentiments did not arouse opposition since many people, both North and South, were favorable to the elimination of slavery.

While Dr. Campbell and others were advocating the freeing of slaves, still others in Ohio were taking a different view on this matter. Caleb Atwater, an early historian of Ohio and participant in its development, stated that:

As a state, it is our interest, in Ohio to have slavery continued in the slave-holding states, for a century yet, otherwise our growth would be checked. The broad and deep streams of wealth,

¹ Alice Dana Adams, The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery in America (Boston: Ginn, 1908), 15-16.

² Free slaves were not always welcome, see pp. 7-8.

³ Not to be confused with Alexander Campbell of the Disciples.

⁴ Charles B. Galbreath, History of Ohio (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1925), II, 176.

numbers, enterprise, youth, vigor, and the very life blood of the slave holding states, now rolling into Ohio like mighty floods, would be stayed. . . .⁵

Atwater thought that these people from the South were important to the development of Ohio. Generally, those who held to Atwater's views were unconcerned about the Negro. They were also the group who aided in the return of slaves who fled north.⁶

Although Ohio became a free state, its becoming so was not as certain as many believe. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory, but it did not control the action the new states could take on the issue. At least this was the view held by those who were at the Ohio Constitutional Convention of 1803. A.M. Brown, a member of the convention, thought that Ohio could encourage emancipation by allowing limited slavery. He suggested that slavery be allowed, but provision be made for the freeing of male slaves at age thirty-five and female slaves at age twenty-five. He hoped that this would encourage many in the South to come to Ohio and later free their slaves. This, Brown thought, would be a "long step toward emancipation."⁷ Such a plan for emancipation did not gain many supporters.

⁵ Caleb Atwater, A History of the State of Ohio Natural and Civil (Cincinnati: Glezen and Shephard, 1838), 331.

⁶ Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 81-82.

⁷ Ibid., 80.

It is interesting to note that at the constitutional convention of 1803, the clause forbidding slavery in Ohio carried by only a single vote, and a clause which would have given suffrage to the Negro failed by only a single vote.⁸

In their attitude toward the Negro, the people of Ohio were divided along geographical lines. Chaddock suggested those living in the southern part of the state were most concerned about keeping Negroes out of the state. They were generally negative in their attitude toward the Negro. Those living along Lake Erie or in the areas further from the Ohio River did not oppose the Negro as strongly and were willing to aid him. The people in the southern part of the state did not think that the Negro was improved by freedom. Most Negroes, they thought, were incapable of performing more than just menial tasks, and would always be poor.⁹

Since Negroes coming into Ohio usually came from south of the Ohio River, they tended to settle in the southern counties. This led to the passage of the "Black Laws" in 1803, aimed at preventing this section from becoming a haven for free Negroes and run-away slaves.

⁸ Ibid., 79.

⁹ Ibid., 82. Part of this attitude may be due to economic considerations. See David Carl Shilling, "Relations of Southern Ohio to the South during the Decade Preceding the Civil War," Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio VIII:I(January 1913), 3-28.

These laws attempted to afford the southern counties protection against a shiftless and dependent population. Negroes were required to present certificates of freedom from some court. Those living in the state had to be registered. Fines were placed against people who employed Negroes without a certificate or who aided them in escaping their masters. Opposition to the bill came mostly from Trumbull and Washington Counties, both of which had a large New England population.¹⁰

The laws concerning the Negro were made more restrictive in 1807, when they were changed to require that Negroes and mulattoes who wished to settle in Ohio post a five-hundred dollar bond, signed by two freeholders who would be responsible for their support and behavior.

The "Black Laws" were not always enforced, but they were a deterrent to the settlement of Negroes. Cincinnati began to enforce the laws in 1829, and about half the Negroes living there moved to Canada. This gives some idea of the effect the laws could have if enforced, and of the number of Negroes who were not complying or could not comply with the laws. In addition, the laws prevented Negroes from testifying in court when a white man was a party in the case.¹¹

Interest in the "Black Laws" of Ohio was not limited to Ohio

¹⁰ Chaddock, op cit., 82-83.

¹¹ Ibid., 83-84. Shilling, op. cit., 8. N. E. Jones, The Squirrel Hunters of Ohio or Glimpses of Pioneer Life (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1898), 74.

during this period. Kentucky brought pressure on the Ohio legislature to get the fugitive slave clause improved. The southern part of the state, having economic ties with the South as well as southern feelings and strong opposition to increased Negro population, supported Kentucky in this attempt to strengthen the law.¹² Opposition came from those counties which were out of touch with the race problem. It is interesting to note that if one plots the location of the Disciple churches during this period on an Ohio map, he will find that very few were to be found located along the Ohio River. Most of them were in the Northeast quarter of the state, with a smaller concentration around Cincinnati.

Following the development of abolitionism in Ohio, during the early 1830's, opposition to the "Black Laws" began to develop. An attempt to repeal them failed in 1839.¹³ Other attempts were made so that by 1850, most of the "Black Laws" had been repealed. However, at the meeting of the Constitutional Convention called for that year in Ohio, there was renewed pressure for their revival. Daniel Drake of Cincinnati favored stopping all Negroes from entering the state. The feeling of the people in the southern counties was expressed in this statement made at the convention:

In those counties where abolitionism and free-soilism predominate there are the fewest negroes. It is the southern counties bordering on Kentucky where there is the largest proportion of negroes; and

¹² Chaddock, op. cit., 103-105.

¹³ Ibid., 86.

these counties are the least friendly to provisions for the encouragement of their immigration or remaining in the state.¹⁴

This convention saw proposals brought before it which would have removed all blacks from the state. The motion to stop Negroes from immigrating was defeated by only five votes.¹⁵ But the surprising thing about the convention was the failure of the anti-slavery forces to put up a strong fight for their views.¹⁶

Opposition to Negroes reached its peak in Mercer County, Ohio, in 1846, when an attempt was made to settle the former slaves of John Randolph of Virginia in that county. The attitude expressed by the people of Mercer County reflected that of many others in Ohio.

John Randolph provided in his will that his slaves should be freed, land given to them, but that they be settled out of Virginia. The executor of his will chose Mercer County, Ohio, because of the presence of Emlen Institute for the training of Negroes, and also because of a large tract of land already in the hands of Negroes. These factors led him to believe that there would be less opposition to Negroes in that area than might be found elsewhere. However, he found that this was not the case.

In June, 1846, 381 Negroes prepared to move to Ohio. They arrived by canal boat at Bremen, July 4, but were not permitted to land.

¹⁴ Ibid., 12. ¹⁵ Shilling, op. cit., 10. ¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

After much discussion, they were finally distributed in Miami and Shelby Counties. One returned to Virginia.¹⁷

As a result of this attempt to settle these former slaves in Mercer County, the people living there resolved in a public meeting that no more Negroes should come into the county, and that those already there had to leave.¹⁸ The governor had to step in and block implementation of this resolution.

Both Western Virginia and Western Pennsylvania were strong in frontier traditions, and belonged more with Ohio and with the Old Northwest in sentiments, than with Eastern Virginia or Eastern Pennsylvania. Unlike the Old Northwest, which never had slavery, both Virginia and Pennsylvania did have slavery down to the time of the Civil War. But slavery was not going to last or increase in either area.

As early as the Constitutional Convention of Virginia in 1829-1830, many men were already beginning to see that slavery was becoming unpopular in the Western part of the state. The young conservative, Able P. Upshur, expressed this when he said,

¹⁷ Henry Noble Sherwood, "The Settlement of the John Randolph Slaves in Ohio," Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, V (1911-1912), 40.

¹⁸ Ibid., 49-50.

There existed in a great portion of the west, a rooted antipathy to this species (slave) of population; the habits of the people are strongly opposed to it.

He then proceeded to describe the westerner very accurately.

With them, personal industry, and a reliance on personal exertion, is the order of society. They know how little slave labor is worth; while their feelings as free men, forbid them to work by the side of a slave.¹⁹

In Pennsylvania slavery was on the decline because of the abolition law of 1780, which provided for the gradual elimination of slavery in the state. Since this law provided that only those born in the state after that date were free, there were some who were young at the time of the passage of the law who were living as slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century. Those born after 1780 were to be free at the age of twenty-eight. In 1790, there were six hundred seventy-five slaves in southwestern Pennsylvania,²⁰ the area where the Campbells began their work of religious reform. In Washington County there were eighty-four slaves in 1800, but only two in 1840.²¹

A summation of the attitude of the people of southwestern

¹⁹ Charles Henry Ambler, A History of West Virginia (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940), 237.

²⁰ Robert Wallace Brewster, "The Rise of the Anti-slavery Movement in Southwestern Pennsylvania, " Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XXII (January 1939), 2-3.

²¹ Edward M. Burns, "Slavery in Western Pennsylvania," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine VIII (July 1925), 207.

Pennsylvania toward slavery, made by Robert W. Brewster, can be used as an example of the attitude of most people of the West. He says,

The existence of numerous abolition, colonization, and anti-slavery societies . . . , must not give the false impression that the people of southwestern Pennsylvania were deeply concerned with the Negro question; quite the contrary was true. There was a minority group of abolitionists, and a much larger group of adherents of the status quo willing to do battle for it when challenged; but by and large the masses of the citizenry during the period were content to live their lives and let well enough alone.²²

This attitude was reflected in Ohio in the abolition riots at Granville,²³ and the prevention of abolition speeches, as was the case at Berlin Center on the Western Reserve.²⁴

Although the status quo was preferred by many, anti-slavery activities grew with the passage of time. In the West anti-slavery activities took two forms; one was in the form of branches of the American Colonization Society, and the other was in the form of the abolition societies which became more important after 1830.

Abolitionist activities were found in Ohio before 1820, but it

²² Brewster, op cit., 15

²³ Robert Price, "The Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention of 1836," The Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLV (April 1936), 184-185; Robert Price, "Further Notes on Granville's Anti-Slavery Disturbances of 1836," The Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLV (October 1936), 365-368.

²⁴ Galbreath, op. cit., 187.

was not until 1824 that abolitionist meetings were being held in southwestern Pennsylvania. In that year the "Western Abolition Society" was formed at Washington.²⁵ These early anti-slavery organizations tended to lose their enthusiasm and generally fell into inactivity not long after their formation. Following the establishment of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1834, and the development of leadership under William Lloyd Garrison, James G. Birney, and Theodore D. Weld, new interest came forth.²⁶

In most areas the program of the American Colonization Society for the removal of slavery and the Negro was the most popular form of anti-slavery. Branches of the Society were formed on the Western Reserve at Warren, Ravenna, and Cleveland in 1826, and Governor Robert Lucas was elected president of the state society in 1854.²⁷ In southwestern Pennsylvania a colonization society was formed

²⁵ Brewster, op. cit., 7.

²⁶ Ibid., 7-8. For a discussion of the importance of Garrison, Birney, and Weld, see Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), for Weld's development of anti-slavery enthusiasm see 79-87.

²⁷ Frances P. Weisenburger, The Passing of the Frontier (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1941), 336. Prominent political leaders were associated with the Society from the beginning. See P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 23-35.

in 1826. Colonization activities were motivated in this area by the activities of the anti-slavery society. When it began to show signs of life, so did the colonization society.²⁸

In both areas the colonization societies did very little. Atwater suggests that in Ohio this was so because there were few Negroes in the state; thus the society had no one to work with.²⁹ However, the existence of the "Black Laws" would indicate there were many Negroes with whom the society could work.

In Ohio, colonization received support from the entire state, but it was in the southern counties where it had the greatest appeal. This area had the largest number of Negroes, and for those areas where Negroes were numerous, colonization offered a means of solving the race problem. Regardless of the interest shown by the whites in the movement, by 1854, only forty-eight Negroes had been sent to Africa from Ohio.³⁰

Anti-slavery societies in Ohio started as early as 1810, when one was formed in Cleveland.³¹ Monroe County had a radical anti-

²⁸ Brewster, op. cit., 16. ²⁹ Atwater, op. cit., 323.

³⁰ Chaddock, op. cit., 93-95. That year the Society sent 553 to Liberia, Staudenraus, op. cit., 251.

³¹ Elroy McKendree Avery, A History of Cleveland (Chicago: Lewis, 1918), I, 151.

slavery society formed in 1826, which favored giving free Negroes full equality,³² something not generally advocated by the abolitionists. That same year saw the formation of the Columbiana Abolition Society at New Lisbon, Ohio, which was one of the first societies to inject a political clause in its minutes, by resolving in 1827 not to support for public office anyone not opposed to slavery.³³

Although these and other societies had been formed, it was not until the division of Lane Seminary at Cincinnati over the discussion of slavery, and the removal to Oberlin College of those who left Lane, that a strong organization came into being.³⁴ Oberlin College was developed in a predominantly New England section of the state where abolition activities were encouraged. The following year, 1835, saw the number of local abolition societies increased from 120 to 213 with 17,253 members.³⁵ The first radical abolition society was formed at Putman, Ohio, in 1835, and James G. Birney was elected secretary. With the coming of Birney, opposition to the movement began to develop. Violence was not unknown and Birney had a press of his destroyed in Cincinnati in 1836.³⁶

³² Adams, op. cit., 149. ³³ Ibid. ³⁴ Barnes, op. cit., 74-77.

³⁵ Chaddock, op. cit., 99-100.

³⁶ Harlow Lindley, "The Quakers in the Old Northwest," Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, V(1911-1912), 54.

The Lane Rebels ³⁷ under the leadership of Theodore Weld were soon preaching abolition in Ohio. They preached first on the Western Reserve and then in other sections. They were responsible for the rapid growth of abolitionism after 1835. ³⁸

Colonization, abolition, and slavery were matters of concern among the major religious groups throughout the West. In Ohio, as elsewhere, there were those who were afraid of division over the issue. Some of the groups did divide within the North and such divisions affected the membership in Ohio. Most of the denominations which were made up of both Northern and Southern members began to develop problems in the early 1820's. Southern Ohio was the area where most of the struggle between opposing forces occurred. ³⁹

The Presbyterians in the Presbytery of Chillicothe had one of the most ardent abolitionists in the state as a member, John Rankin. ⁴⁰ This Presbytery voted funds in 1827 for the publication of an anti-slavery pamphlet. Later, it adopted a resolution holding that slavery was a sin. ⁴¹

³⁷ The Lane Rebels were the group who moved from Lane to Oberlin College following the division at Lane.

³⁸ Barnes, op. cit., 76-78, 84. ³⁹ Chaddock, op. cit., 93-95.

⁴⁰ Weisenberger, op. cit., 364-365. For a sketch of John Rankin, see Felix J. Kock, "Marking the Old 'Abolition Holes,' " Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXII(April 1913), 308-318.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The Synod of Ohio passed a resolution in 1827 that slaveholders would not be tolerated in the Synod.⁴²

Unlike the Presbyterians, the Methodists were more favorable to colonization, and opposed to abolition. They voted to support colonization in the Annual Conference held at Springfield in 1835. They also condemned abolition because it was divisive. Colonization, it was thought, would not disturb the Methodist organization. The following year the conference censured two members for having taken part in an abolition meeting. The conference also condemned abolitionism the next year.⁴³ The division of the Methodist church in 1845 relieved some of the pressure concerning slavery.

The Disciples were not immune to the discussion of this issue which was going on around them. This will be discussed in detail below, but it should be noted here that although the Disciples tried to discern between political and religious issues, this did not mean that they avoided the political. Their political activities are seen in the actions of a few who sought public office. Because of a desire to eliminate slavery from Virginia, Alexander Campbell ran for the Constitutional Convention of

⁴² Adams, op. cit., 99-100.

⁴³ Ibid., 100-101. James Gilruth, "The Journal of James Gilruth" in William Warren Sweet (ed.) The Methodists (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1946), 460.

of 1829-30.⁴⁴ David Purviance had been in the Ohio legislature and had lost his seat because of his opposition to the "Black Laws," which placed the Negro at a disadvantage, something he thought unjust.⁴⁵ The abolitionist Disciple, Leicester King of Warren, Ohio, father-in-law to both W.K. Pendelton, a close associate of Alexander Campbell, and Charles Brown, who was a Disciple and member of a prominent Western Reserve abolitionist family, was the Liberty Party candidate for governor of Ohio in 1842 and 1844, and for vice-president of the United States in 1845, although he refused to accept the place on the ticket.⁴⁶

The West of this period was a place where differing ideas were to be found and most ideas found some form of expression. Most people of this section felt strongly about their ideas and gave strong expression to them. That the Disciples could be a part of this society and not be influenced by the social activities of the times, seems impossible. It will be pointed out in the following chapters that the Disciples were influenced by the social activity around them and that they had differences of opinion among themselves on these issues.

⁴⁴ Alexander Campbell, "The Crisis," The Millennial Harbinger (February 1832), 86.

⁴⁵ David Purviance, The Biography of Elder David Purviance (Dayton: B. P. and G. W. Elis, 1848), 93-97.

⁴⁶ "Leicester King," in The Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery (Cincinnati: Western Biographical, 1883), 545. Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 213.

CHAPTER II

THE SLAVERY CONTROVERSY FROM THE BEGINNING TO 1830

The Disciples of Christ denomination came into being through the union of two groups; one led by Barton Warren Stone, the other led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Although the Campbells are the better known leaders and their influence was more powerful on the thinking of the movement, the branch led by Stone was older. Both groups were concerned about the divisions which existed in the church and were concerned about bringing them to an end. Although the slavery controversy was not an issue during this early period, the three leaders mentioned here did have something to say about it at this time.

Barton Warren Stone is probably best known as the minister of the church at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, at the time of the great revival held there in 1801. Born at Port Tobacco, Maryland, in 1772, Stone was reared in the Dan River Valley of Virginia near the North Carolina line. His home was not far from Guilford, North Carolina, where David Caldwell conducted a school. It was at this school that Stone received his formal education.¹

¹ William Garrett West, Barton Warren Stone (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), vii, 1-4.

Stone moved to Kentucky in 1796 where he became minister to the churches at Concord and Cane Ridge. Not long after his settlement in Kentucky, he had to make a trip to Georgia on business and was commissioned by the Transylvania Presbytery to solicit funds for a college. While on this trip Stone became aware of the evils of slavery.² In describing his reactions Stone said:

. . . My soul sickened at the sight of slavery in more horrid forms than I had ever seen it before; poor negroes! some chained to their work -- some wearing iron collars -- all half naked, and followed and driven by the merciless lash of a gentlemen overseer -- distress appeared scowling in every face. This was the exciting cause of my abandonment of slavery.³

Although Stone developed a strong opposition to slavery, he cannot be classed as an abolitionist. He lived most of his life in slaveholding states and did not condemn slaveholders as such. Many members of his churches were slaveholders.

During the early days of the great religious revival in the West, Stone freed his own slaves. He said he did this from a "sense of right." This step appears to have caused him financial hardship, but he considered a good conscience more important. Stone stated that the revival

² Ibid., 16-17. Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), II, 189. Barton Warren Stone, A Short History of the Life of Barton W. Stone, Written by Himself, in Rhodes Thompson, Voices from Cane Ridge (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954) 55-58.

³ Ibid., 57-58.

of the early 1800's led many to emancipate their slaves. He felt that this action alone made the revival worth while.⁴

Although Stone emancipated his own slaves, and felt that slavery and the slave trade were not in keeping with Christianity,⁵ he did not believe that general emancipation of slaves would be good. He said that "were those now in slavery among us to be thus emancipated, I would instantly remove to a distant land beyond their reach."⁶ He felt that such people would be a social menace and uncontrollable, creating a public evil. Like other Disciples he regarded the American Colonization Society as the solution to the problem.

In The Christian Messenger, a paper published by Stone for many years, the work of the Colonization Society received a good deal of space. He promoted it in the first volume, saying that he "wish(es) to awaken the attention of the West, and to engage all in the laudable work."⁷ The leaders of the Colonization Society recognized the need for the influence of the clergy. They wrote Stone that they hoped those reading

⁴ Ibid., 74.

⁵ Barton Warren Stone, The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone (Cincinnati: J. A. and U. P. James, 1847), 290.

⁶ Ibid., 289.

⁷ "The Colonization Society," Christian Messenger (February 1827), 95-96.

his paper would support the Society.⁸ In May, 1828, Stone presented to his readers an address by Dr. S. G. Mitchell supporting the Society. Following the address Stone appended these words of his own:

To these sentiments my heart responds amen. O That the spirit which runs through every vein of the oration were more generally felt by the children of America! O That my eyes might be blessed with seeing and my ears with hearing, tens of thousands of our countrymen engaging in this benevolent plan of forming societies for the colonization of the free people of color in Africa! With the apostle to the Gentiles I speak to all whom I can influence to right: "Be imitators of me," in this respect -- unite, as I have done, with this benevolent society, and unite speedily.⁹

Stone was encouraged in June, 1829, by the political figures who were uniting behind the Colonization Society. This led him to ask the question, "Shall Christians be idle spectators, and not unite their efforts in the holy cause?"¹⁰ He went on to say that for more than thirty years he had opposed slavery. He pointed out that he emancipated all his slaves and gave them money or other goods to get started in freedom.

Stone favored government action to curb slavery. He supported the use of the Navy to suppress the slave trade and saw in it an

⁸ R. R. Gurley to Barton Warren Stone, Washington, D. C. in Christian Messenger (July 1828), 198

⁹ S. G. Mitchell, "An Oration February 22, 1829, on the Subject of Colonizing the Free People of Color in Africa, Indianapolis, Indiana," Christian Messenger (May 1829), 163.

¹⁰ Gurley, op. cit., 199.

expression of national feeling against slavery. Being more dogmatic on the issue than other Disciple leaders, he stated that slavery was wrong and no one should attempt to justify it. He asked, "Shall we as a nation -- shall we as Christians approve this course of protecting and of . . . guarding the liberties of Africa, and not regard her children among us at home?"¹¹ He did not think so.

He did not consider it politic to allow the free Negro to remain in America. For this and other reasons the Colonization Society seemed to him to be the solution to the problem. In February, 1830, he went to the trouble of describing for his readers how the Society was formed.

Writing about the Colonization Society was not all that Stone did to promote the ideas of this organization. He was active in its efforts where he lived and was elected the first president of the Georgetown chapter in 1830.¹²

In September, 1834, Stone moved to Jacksonville, Illinois.¹³ Part of the reason for this move was his opposition to slavery and to

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Barton Warren Stone, "Georgetown Colonization Society," Christian Messenger (June 1830), 163-164.

¹³ West, op. cit., 217. Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGrott, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948) 189.

free some slaves which had come into his possession.¹⁴

Stone did not take the same attitude as did the other leaders toward slavery. He did not consider slavery in keeping with the principles of Christianity and therefore, he concluded, slavery was unchristian. However, he did not make the issue a test of fellowship. He seems to have been stronger in his opposition than many of the other leaders.

Stone had already determined his course of action and attitude toward slavery before the Campbells, Thomas and Alexander, arrived in America from Ireland. Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) received his education at home and in Scotland. He associated himself with the Anti-Burgher branch of the Seceder Presbyterian church. The Anti-Burgher group did not believe that the burgesses of Scottish cities could swear to support the established church.¹⁵ Further division occurred, leading to two parties in both the Burgher and the Anti-Burgher churches.¹⁶ Such divisions were incompatible with Thomas Campbell's view of Christianity.

¹⁴ West, op. cit., 189.

¹⁵ Lester G. McAllister, Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954) 29, 45; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., 126-127.

¹⁶ McAllister, op. cit., 45.

By 1804 he had come to see that the differences between the various branches of the Seceder church in Ireland were trivial. The basic cause for the division in Scotland did not exist in Ireland, since no oath was required. Campbell had urged reunion for some time, but in 1804 he gathered those leaders he thought could aid in effecting a reunion. The report of this group was presented by him to the synod of the Anti-Burgher group later that year. In his presentation he stated that the division of the church was not in keeping with the character of Christianity.¹⁷ Although his efforts in Ireland failed at this time, union of the church continued to be his major concern.¹⁸

Not long after this attempt at reunion of the Seceder Church in Ireland, Thomas Campbell's health began to fail. He was urged by his physician to take a sea voyage to recover his health. Since many of the people living around him had moved to America, it was suggested that he might go there on a visit. His move to America was influenced by other factors which included the division in the church, political troubles, oppression by the landowners. Arrangements being made, Thomas sailed in April, 1807, arriving in Philadelphia in May.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid. , 53; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit. , 127.

¹⁸ McAllister, op. cit. , 54-55; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit. , 129.

¹⁹ McAllister, op. cit. , 56-59; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit. , 129.

Thomas Campbell became a member of the Chartiers Presbytery soon after his arrival in America and continued in that group until May, 1809. By that time the narrowness of the Presbyterians caused him to withdraw.²⁰ During the period of controversy with the Presbyterians, Campbell had preached and functioned as a minister in accordance with what he thought the Bible required. He was concerned over his separation from the Presbyterians, since he did not favor division in the church. Union he thought was possible if based on the Bible alone. The Bible was a sufficient rule of faith and order for him.²¹

After several months of preaching to an informal group in the area around Washington, Pennsylvania, he felt that some formal organization was necessary. This resulted in a meeting at the home of Abraham Alters in which Campbell stressed the evil of church division, the Bible as the sufficient standard of faith and as the basis for union. This meeting led to the formation of the Christian Association of Washington. This group was not to be a new church, but rather a group made up of members of many churches working for union of all churches. The formal statement of the group is known as The Declaration and Address of the

²⁰ For details on Campbell's relations with the Presbyterians see Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., 131-139.

²¹ McAllister, op. cit., 91-95; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., 130.

Christian Association of Washington. ²²

The Declaration and Address is important to this discussion of slavery and abolition because it set the standard for interpreting the Bible by those who became known as Disciples. One important principle in the document was that of private judgement. Campbell held that it was time for people to act and think for themselves and to take direction immediately from the Bible. This meant that each individual was to interpret for himself what the Bible had to say. Naturally, differences in interpretation of what the Bible said on slavery led to problems later. A second important principle set down in The Declaration and Address was that the Scripture was the sole authority for Christian action. Items not clearly stated in the Bible were not to be admitted as matters of faith.²³ This principle was also to have an effect on the controversy over slavery.

In the years before 1830, Thomas Campbell did not have much to say on the slavery issue. Slavery had been a factor in his decision to finally settle his family in Pennsylvania. In 1818 he moved to Burlington, Kentucky, where he was soon conducting a school. During the summer of 1819, he noticed a group of Negroes in a nearby grove and

²² McAllister, op. cit., 96-100; Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., 139-141.

²³ McAllister, op. cit., 107-108, 117.

invited them into his schoolhouse for instruction. This meeting proved a success and he was moved to offer them instruction again on the next Sunday. However, the next day he was told that teaching of Negroes and addressing them without one or more white men as witnesses was against Kentucky law. The idea that it was illegal to give religious instruction to any group of people caused him to resolve to leave Kentucky at once.²⁴ This resulted in his moving back to Pennsylvania where he settled his family near West Middletown. He associated himself with his son, Alexander, in the operation of Buffalo Seminary and became the pastor of the Brush Run Church, which he had served before. Although Richardson suggests that his settlement in Pennsylvania was prompted by the existence of slavery in Virginia,²⁵ West Middletown was about half way between the Brush Run Church and Bethany where Alexander's school was located.²⁶

Although Thomas Campbell's views were always respected by the members of the movement, his place of leadership was taken over by his son soon after Alexander and the rest of the family arrived in

²⁴ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 488, 494-496; Winfred Ernest Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier A History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), 178; Garrison and DeGroot, *op. cit.*, 469.

²⁵ Richardson, *op. cit.*, 497-498.

²⁶ See map in Garrison and DeGroot, *op. cit.*, 157.

America in 1809.

In his Grounds of Division, A. T. DeGroot sees Alexander Campbell's thinking on slavery divided into two periods, that before 1830, and that following 1830. In the first period Campbell was anti-slavery. His actions at the Constitutional Convention of Virginia show this. After 1830, Campbell changed his views in order to preserve the Disciple movement. DeGroot rightly points out that in the early period there were not many radicals on either side and that the organization was not threatened by division over this issue. But as the radicals developed, Campbell changed his point of view on the matter to avoid division.²⁷ DeGroot's point of view is open to question. The statements which follow will indicate that Campbell remained the same in his opposition to slavery. He also did not change his opinion about the Bible's view on slavery or the relationship of Christianity to Slavery. His emphasis did change, however.

Alexander Campbell did not favor either abolition or anti-abolition. He seems to fit into that class of persons whom Jonas Hartzel called "Political non-extension abolitionists."²⁸ Campbell confirms this view

²⁷ Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Grounds of Division Among the Disciples of Christ (Chicago: privately printed, 1940), 75; Thomas William Grafton, Men of Yesterday (St. Louis: Christian, 1889), 128-129.

²⁸ Jonas Hartzel to John Boggs, Davenport, (Iowa), Nov (ember) 28, 1857, in Magazine (December 1857), 189.

in what he had to say on the matter. That Campbell favored emancipation is seen in his personal action toward slaves inherited from his father-in-law. These he freed along with two others purchased from a Methodist minister, although Virginia law forbade this.²⁹

Supporting the view that Campbell opposed slavery and abolition at the same time, but disagreeing with DeGroot that he changed his position, is Robert Frederick West in his Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion. West says that Campbell's "constant position was the third alternative, anti-slavery with discrimination, rather than yielding to sweeping generalizations."³⁰ It was this attitude, believes W. E. Garrison, that avoided a division among the Disciples on the issue.³¹ Lunger holds that Campbell's avoidance, in many cases, and opposition to discussion of controversial issues, reflects "a denominational characteristic."

But in general his attitude roots in his left-wing background. Since he was a New Testament primitivist, who found in the Scriptures no divinely revealed pattern for political life, political judgements were left in the area of "opinion" rather than of "faith," and were therefore a purely individual matter.³²

²⁹D. Ray Lindley, Apostle of Freedom (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), 100-102.

³⁰ Robert Frederick West, Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 103.

³¹ Garrison, op. cit., 178-180.

³² Harold L. Lunger, The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 64.

In examining Campbell's views we see that his contemporaries agreed with the views of DeGroot rather than with those of West. There is probably some truth in both views. That Campbell changed from anti-slavery to pro-slavery was not the case. That he did shift his emphasis was the case and that he was motivated by a desire to avoid division was a contributing factor, but the fact that Bethany College was receiving more and more of its support from the South probably had something to do with his attitude.

Alexander Campbell's writings before the beginning of the Harbinger contain only one reference to slavery. In discussing the degeneration of Christianity in 1823, Campbell used slavery as an indication that such was taking place. He said:

If any thing is wanting to finish a picture of the most glaring inconsistencies, add to this those christians who are daily extolling the blessing of civil and religious liberty, and at the same time, by a system of the most cruel oppression, separating the wife from the embraces of her husband, and the mother from her tender offspring; violating every principle, and rendering every tie, that endears life and reconciles man to his lot; and that, forsooth, because "might gives right," and a man is held guilty because his skin is a shade darker than the standard color of the times.³³

Campbell saw this activity as fulfillment of a prophecy in II Timothy 4:3-4:

There will be a time when they will not endure wholesome teaching; but having itching ears, they will according to their own lust, heap up to themselves teachers. And from truth, indeed, they will turn away their ears and be turned aside to fables.

³³ Alexander Campbell, The Christian Religion, " Christian Baptist (August 1823), 18.

Also 3: 1-5 followed the same lines:

This also know, that in latter days perilous times will come. For men will be self-lovers, money-lovers, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy without natural affection, . . . NOW FROM THESE TURN AWAY." ³⁴

From the beginning of the movement down to 1830 when the Disciples began to withdraw from the Baptists and to unite as a separate movement, the slavery question had been a topic of discussion, but on a different plane from that of 1830.

Alexander Campbell had been moved by his opposition to slavery to run as a representative to the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830. He thought that by action in the convention, slavery might be stopped. At the convention he found others with similar views, but they were of the opinion that it would be best at that time to keep slavery from being recognized in the Constitution. By such a policy ordinary action of the legislature could control it. ³⁵

In the discussion which took place at the convention, Campbell expressed the opinion that a few well trained men were more important

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Alexander Campbell, "The Crisis," Harbinger (February 1832), 86; Richardson, op. cit., II, 305.

than a "whole district of mere slaveholders."³⁶ This attitude extended into Campbell's discussion of this subject in the early 1830's.

With the coming of the 1830's came a change in the general attitude toward slavery. Although radicals had been present before 1830, it was about this time that they became vocal. It was in the 1830's that the Great Revival led by Charles G. Finney increased the Kingdom of God by hundreds of thousands. Finney won the support of a group of men who were devoted to the elimination of sin regardless of what its nature happened to be. It was in the revival of those years that the seeds for radical abolition were sown.³⁷

³⁶ G. L. Cranmer, "Alexander Campbell. Teacher, Preacher and Statesman," The West Virginia Historical Magazine Quarterly II (January 1940), 70. For a discussion of Campbell's part in the Convention see Lunger, op. cit., 75-104.

³⁷ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 3-16.

CHAPTER III

THE SLAVERY-ABOLITIONIST CONTROVERSY

1830-1840

In The Declaration and Address, Thomas Campbell set forth the principle that Christians could speak religiously or as Christians only when the Bible made some specific statement about a given subject. Thus, if the Bible did not specifically forbid a practice, Christians could not forbid it. The converse was also true, that if the Bible commanded a specific act, then it must be followed by Christians. The Campbells felt that by following this principle, division in the church could be avoided, and union could be effected. For Thomas Campbell's son, Alexander, who became the major leader of the Disciples, the Bible was silent on abolition; but for many others the Bible was clear in its opposition to slavery. The conflict which developed among the Disciples was one which centered around interpretation of what the Bible had to say, or did not have to say, on the matter of slavery. Throughout his life, Alexander Campbell managed to dominate the thinking of the Disciples, but there were times when some of the brethren did not interpret the Bible as he did. The interpretation on the slavery issue was one area where the division of opinion became greater as the Civil War approached.

The influence of Alexander Campbell, Barton Warren Stone, and Walter Scott¹ appears to have kept the voting of disfellowship based on slaveholding limited to a few churches. However, these were cases where either direct disfellowship with slaveholders or anti-slavery resolutions were passed.²

Alexander Campbell expressed most of his views on slavery in the pages of the Harbinger, which he edited and published from 1830 to 1866. In the first issues of the Harbinger he reported three items concerning slavery. One, taken from the Wheeling Complier, concerned two anti-slavery bills then in the Kentucky legislature;³ the second pertained to an extract from a speech by Henry Clay to the Colonization Society of Frankfort. The third item pertained to the passing of a law to read or write. To these Campbell commented that in the recent Virginia Constitutional Convention it had been contended that the Negroes

¹ Barton W. Stone was editor of The Christian Messenger which circulated in Kentucky and Indiana; Walter Scott was a missionary to the Western Reserve and editor of The Evangelist.

² For example, in 1841, twelve of the churches on the Western Reserve issued an "Address to the Disciples on the Sin of Slavery," which this writer has not seen cited in any work on this subject. The church at Salem, Indiana, in 1855, and the church at Chagrin Falls, Ohio, in 1856, passed anti-slavery resolutions. Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 229, cite the action of the church at Jeffersonville, Indiana, in disfellowshipping with slaveholders.

³ "Kentucky Anti-Slavery" Wheeling Complier in Harbinger (January 1830), 36-37.

had souls and should be counted for representation. He asserted that:

Knowledge and slavery are incompatible. The priest made this discovery before Alfred the Great mounted the throne. Let this barbarous law of Georgia be out-Heroded by any enactment, of any age or country. Produce its superior who can.⁴

Campbell took considerable interest in the condition of the Negro and as early as 1830 was favoring Negro education. He thought that with education, slavery would disappear as education and slavery were incompatible.⁵ In the third issue of the Harbinger, he again expressed his opposition to laws which forbade the right of slaves to be taught to read.⁶

Campbell expressed himself as being strongly anti-slavery in early 1830. Taking as a starting point a statement by a Mr. Brantly in a paper called the Star, which cautioned readers who were slaveholders against admitting the Star into their territories, as it might bring ruin to their slave interest, Campbell made the same claim for the Harbinger. He said "it may jeopardize your interest in the persons of your slaves, and in the heavenly inheritance."⁷ However, this warning turned out to

⁴ Alexander Campbell, "Georgia Slaves," Harbinger (January 1830), 47.

⁵ D. Ray Lindley, Apostle of Freedom (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), 102.

⁶ Alexander Campbell, "Emancipation of White Slaves," Harbinger (March 1830), 128-129.

⁷ Ibid., 128-129.

be unnecessary, as Campbell moderated his view considerably before 1835.

In this article Campbell stated what he felt to be the background of slavery.

The relation of master and servant is older than Abraham, and has been found in all ages and countries, Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian. Even in the Millennium, I presume there will be masters and servants; but every servant is not a slave, nor every master free.⁸

He then goes on to say that the masters needed to be emancipated, for they were really slaves. They were slaves to fear. They were more afraid of their slaves than the slaves were of them. That such fear existed in Virginia was indicated by a bill which had been introduced in the legislature for the purpose of preventing Negroes from being taught to read. This action, Campbell believed, indicated that Virginia slaveholders were in fear and were slaves of their own slaves. Campbell raised the question of the constitutionality of such a law. He thought that "to prohibit teaching or learning the art of reading (is) the most effectual destruction of the liberty of the press which I can imagine."⁹ He closed the article by saying he would come back to the subject of emancipating the master from his slaves, and by rejoicing that the bill failed in the senate.

This article, along with the rest of the Harbinger, drew com-

⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁹ Ibid., 131.

ment from one reader in Essex, Virginia, "T", who was a slaveholder. "T" liked all the Harbinger except what Campbell had to say on slavery. He was himself opposed to slavery, but thought that the less said on the matter the better, since he thought it caused a reaction to those things which were being done to help the slaves. He even presented a plan which he was promoting for gradual emancipation. He cautioned Campbell that his interference in slavery would be used against the Reformation movement, as the Disciples sometimes called themselves. In response to this letter Campbell said that he was going to do and say what he conceived his duty to be, and was not going to be deterred by loss of patronage or threat.¹⁰

Whether or not the comments of "T" had any influence on Campbell is unknown, but he did not publish anything on slavery again for almost two years. The next notice of the subject came after the Southampton Massacre. Following this there was a change in his tone, and he was less aggressive.

An event which caused much discussion over slavery was the Nat Turner insurrection in Southampton County, Virginia. Turner, who was a religious fanatic, was convinced that he was to lead his fellow

¹⁰ "T" to Alexander Campbell, April 6, 1830, Essex, Virginia, in Harbinger (April 1830), 188-190; Alexander Campbell, "Response to 'T'," Harbinger (April 1830), 191.

slaves to freedom. During the insurrection he led about seventy slaves in a slaughter of about sixty white persons. In the discussion which followed in the Virginia Legislature, suggestions were made which would lead to the elimination of slavery and Negroes in Virginia. However, when a vote was taken on a motion which would emancipate and expel the slaves from Virginia, the pro-slavery group was victorious. Support for the motion came mostly from the western counties which were under-represented. The discussion caused by this event was the most serious on the slavery issue in the history of Virginia.¹¹

Campbell expressed hope that this experience would lead the Virginians to do something about slavery. He also reacted to outside interference in the affairs of the state. At this point he saw the political and Christian principles in "conjunction" with each other. He thought the politicians would see that slave labor had wasted the real estate of the eastern section of the state, and was now the most expensive labor system that could be used. Unless this system were stopped, he foresaw Virginia becoming a wilderness. Virginia had the power to extricate herself from this evil, but he added that this may be like saying

¹¹ Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 52-53; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 225-229; Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), I, 149.

that "it is in the power of a drunkard to become sober." ¹²

In attempting to foster the feeling for action on the matter of slavery following the uprising in Southampton, Campbell described slavery as,

. . . That largest and blackest blot upon our national escutcheon, that many-headed monster, that Pandora's box, that bitter root, . . . is now evoking the attention of the ancient and venerable commonwealth in a manner as unexpected as it is irresistible and cheering to every philanthropist. . . We have thought that if the abolition of slavery was legitimately to be laid before the people of this commonwealth as it now is, there would be found even among slaveholders a majority to concur in a national system of emancipation. ¹³

Campbell was a man desiring action on slavery and possessing a plan whereby this action could be implemented. He thought the slavery and race problem could be solved without additional taxes and on a fair basis. The national debt had been paid off by 1832 and the government had ten million dollars, which had been going toward the debt, available for other use. Henry Clay had proposed that this money be collected and given to the states, but Campbell opposed such a policy. He would rather have this money used for the colonization of colored people, free and slave. The program he proposed would start in 1834, and run until all the colored population were removed. ¹⁴ He also thought that the

¹² Alexander Campbell, "Slavery in Virginia," Harbinger (January 1832), 15.

¹³ Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), II, 367-368.

¹⁴ Campbell, "The Crisis," 87.

Free Negroes could be sent off at once, and then the female slaves of a given age should be bought from masters unwilling to emancipate. Thus slavery would be ended in about twenty years.¹⁵ It appears that Campbell was hoping many would voluntarily turn over their slaves to the government, but those who would not, would have to sell.¹⁶

Alexander Campbell, like other leaders of the Disciple movement, favored and supported the American Colonization Society and its program. Some Disciples turned their slaves over to the Society.

Campbell did not speak on this subject again until December, 1835. At this time he indicated that he had received many communications on the subject, but they had been laid on the table because of the "present storm."¹⁷ The "present storm" which Campbell referred to was the beginning of the abolition movement under the leadership of Theodore D. Weld and the Lane Rebels. In the latter part of 1834 Weld toured Ohio in behalf of the abolition cause. In the late summer of 1835 the Lane Rebels, with their headquarters at Oberlin, were

¹⁵ Ibid., 88.

¹⁶ How he was going to force the sale of these slaves is not made clear. Three years later he expressed views on property rights which would have made this possible. See next page.

¹⁷ Alexander Campbell, "Slavery and Anti-Slavery," Harbinger (December 1835), 587.

preaching abolition in the state.¹⁸ Oberlin was on the Western Reserve where much of the strength of the Disciples in Ohio was centered. Abolition activities raised questions in the minds of some Disciples at this time as the exchange of letters between Walter Scott and Nathaniel Field, which will be discussed below, indicates. Campbell had just completed a tour in the South in the spring of 1835,¹⁹ and the reaction that he probably encountered to abolition movements caused him to become less aggressive on slavery than he had been earlier. In his article, "Slavery and Anti-Slavery," he saw the relationship of North and South, and the matter of slave ownership, from a more conservative point of view.

I would hold as sacred the right of the South to their slaves as I do the right of the North to their land, neither of which were at first obtained in the temple of Justice and by the laws of immutable right and obligation; but both of which now consecrated and sanctioned by national agreements, bonds, and pledges, as solemn as matrimony, and as irrevocable as the Magna Carta of our national existence.

I would, therefore, no more think of wresting the slave from his master than I would the land from its owner, without a full and satisfactory consideration.²⁰

Campbell held sacred the right of property and could not see how slavery could be ended without compensation to the slave owner. He went on to say that he opposed any society, abolition or otherwise, which would

¹⁸ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 76-77, 80.

¹⁹ Richardson, op. cit., II, 399-400.

²⁰ Campbell, "Slavery and Anti-Slavery," 588.

interfere with this basic right.²¹

He again brought up his suggestion for the use of surplus money in the Federal treasury for the aid of the Colonization Society. In addition he suggested that the Navy's ships, "now rotting in our harbors," could partly, at least, be used for the transportation of slaves to Liberia. He suggested that petitions be circulated to get Congress to act toward that end.²²

Although he had received many letters on the subject, Campbell had not answered them and offered as his reason his not wanting to become involved in controversy. He said that,

Numerous and various communications on the subject of SLAVERY are received at this office. They are all laid upon our table until the present storm be passed by. A person might as rationally expect a candid hearing in a Methodist chapel in defense of Calvinism, or an impartial audience in a Calvin Tabernacle in defense of Armenianism, as in this moment of feverish excitement, bordering on insanity, to expect in the South or in the North a fair and impartial, and liberal and magnanimous consideration of any question arising out of the rival interest of free and slave labor.²³

Campbell thought the problem needed cool heads and serious attention when being examined. The storm did not pass quickly and the next mention of the slavery issue by Campbell was not until 1845.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. It was during 1835 that the abolition petitions began reaching Washington in large numbers. This may have prompted Campbell's suggestion of their use for purposes of the Colonization Society. See Barnes, op. cit., 110.

²³ Campbell, "Slavery and Anti-Slavery," 587.

One controversy over slavery which probably caused Campbell some concern was that between Nathaniel Field and Walter Scott, which took place in 1835. This was the first exchange of views between an abolitionist Disciple and one taking a moderate view published in a Disciple periodical.

CHAPTER IV

SETTING THE STAGE FOR CONTROVERSY

The first signs that differences of opinion existed on the matter of slavery being a sin appeared among the Disciples in the middle of the 1830's. The abolitionist agitation's pace had been set by the professionals, William Lloyd Garrison, James G. Briney, Theodore D. Weld and others, who applied the revival methods to spreading abolition propaganda.¹ Slavery was no longer considered an economic drain on the nation, but a sin.² This distinction, made by the abolitionist who followed Weld, was to be found reflected in the controversy between the abolitionist and anti-slavery anti-abolitionist Disciples.

This difference of opinion was first presented in the public press through the publication of an exchange of letters between Nathaniel Field, M. D., and Walter Scott. Field, who was well known in Indiana Medical circles, was known as an abolitionist by his neighbors before the Disciples were aware of his existence. In 1834, he had opposed publicly the enforcement of the Indiana "Black Laws."³ Later, in 1854,

¹ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 16.

² Ibid., 79.

³ DeWitt C. Goodrich and Charles R. Tuttle, An Illustrated History of the State of Indiana (Indianapolis: Richard S. Peale, 1875) 668-669.

he freed several slaves who came into his possession.⁴

By 1834, Walter Scott was editing The Evangelist at Carthage, Kentucky. Scott had come to America from Scotland and fallen under the influence of the Campbells not long after his arrival. He was made missionary of the Mahoning Association in the Western Reserve of Ohio, where he became famous as a preacher. His position on slavery was almost the same as that of Alexander Campbell.⁵ He did not see any easy solution and thought that the state, not the church, would have to act to get rid of the evil.⁶

The exchange of letters between Field and Scott came at a time when there was much discussion of the issue, caused in part by the conflict over the matter at the Lane Seminary.⁷ The American Anti-Slavery Society was just getting its program of agitation underway. The Disciples themselves had been divided from the Baptists since 1830, the date usually accepted for the separation.⁸ The conditions of the times, being what

⁴ Ibid., 669. ⁵ See above Page 28.

⁶ William Baxter, Life of Elder Walter Scott (Cincinnati: Bosworth, Chase and Hall, 1874), 359-360.

⁷ Barnes, op. cit., 71.

⁸ Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), II, 327-328; Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 192.

they were when Field's letters arrived, undoubtedly caused Scott to enter the discussion with misgivings.

Scott ignored Field's first letter, probably thinking that Field would not press the issue. With the arrival of a second letter in September, 1834, it became apparent that the issue would have to be faced.

This series of letters is important because it shows that there was no unity of opinion among the Disciples on the slavery issue. They indicate also the thinking on both sides and the basic arguments to be used later in the controversy. For these reasons it is necessary to take a detailed look at their arguments.

In Field's second letter to Scott (which becomes the first of the series) Field indicated that he was interested in Scott's views on "slavery as it is at this time tolerated by some of the professed restorers of the Ancient Gospel." ⁹ He was of the opinion that some of the leaders were lacking in moral honesty and courage, since they had had little to say on the subject. This probably referred to Campbell, as well as other editors, who had said very little on the matter to this time and had published few of the letters they had received on it. This failure to discuss the issue in the open, led Field to believe they were willing to compromise truth with "robbers and oppressors," as slaveholders were, in his opinion.

⁹ Nathaniel Field to Walter Scott, Jeffersonville, (Indiana) September 20, 1834, in Evangelist (October 6, 1834), 233.

Field could not see the Reformation accomplishing anything if it sanctioned slavery. Slavery bred ignorance and the unenlightened mind could never come to an understanding of the truth. Since slavery was immoral, he asked, "Can you, Brother Scott, as an honest teacher, hold your peace, under those convictions which every rational man must have when he reflects upon the subject?"¹⁰ Field did not understand how Scott could avoid saying something on the matter. If the ancient Gospel was to be restored, the "trinity of evils," kingcraft, priestcraft, and slavery had to be put down.

Field went on to tell Scott that in Indiana men were beginning to "throw off their cowardice and . . . man-fearing spirit"¹¹ and to speak out against this evil. Scott was informed that slavery had become a test of fellowship in the Silver Creek Association (although it is learned later this was more limited than Field indicated) as well as in the church at Jeffersonville. This action was based on the view that slavery was a sin and Christians should not break the loaf with sinners.

One of the issues in the discussion which followed was where the Silver Creek Association and the Jeffersonville church received their authority for making a judgement about slavery and for disfellowship with slaveholders. Scott was of the opinion that the laws made by associations were only human laws, and as such were not to conflict with the laws of

¹⁰ Ibid. ¹¹ Ibid.

God.

One principle maintained by the Disciples was that something not specifically stated as a sin in the scripture could not be imposed as a test of fellowship by the churches.¹² To violate this principle was to violate the basis of the Reformation itself. On this issue both sides considered they were following the principles. The abolitionists held that slavery was a sin, and thus it became a legitimate test. The moderates held that slavery was not a sin according to the Bible, and thus not a legitimate test. The issue rested on whether or not slavery was a sin.

The action of the Silver Creek Association concerning slaveholders was taken before the Association became Disciple. Field's reference to the Association's action was intended to show the feelings among the people in his section of Indiana on the subject. As for the church he said:

The act of the church, which I called a resolution, was simply an expression of their feelings, a determination with regard to their own conduct, in a matter of order-- call it what you please. In my humble opinion it is no legislation: no exercise of law-making power; and I mus(t) say, brother Scott, that if your position is carried out it will not leave us any discretion in the matters of discipline.¹³

As an illustration of what he meant, Field drew an example of

¹² Ibid., 234; see above Pages 44-45.

¹³ Ibid., (January 5, 1835), 17.

a church in Ohio which decided that gambling, horse racing, and dancing were not sin. From Scott's point of view, they would have to fellowship with this church, since such things are not specifically listed in the Bible as being sins. He asked Scott if the church did not have the right to judge what it considered disorderly and scandalous. He went so far as to say that the Disciples themselves had refused to "break the loaf" with Methodists and Presbyterians, because of laws which the Disciples had enacted, and because they had judged the other denominations disobedient to the commands of the Bible. Such action in these two cases seems inconsistent since the principles are the same. He argued further that:

To make laws for the church of Christ is treason, it is usurpation; but for the church to resolve to obey his laws and his only, and to refuse fellowship with those who disobey them is another thing. How can you show any legislation in this conduct. . . ? The Lord has commanded us to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," what (they) are we must judge; and that slavery is one I am able to show if you would give me an opportunity.¹⁴

In response to Field's letters, A. Littell tells more about the reason for the Silver Creek Association's action concerning slaveholders. According to Mr. Littell, the resolution was passed in 1825, against the Long Run Association of Kentucky, because of the treatment given by some of the members who were masters of some of the slave mem-

¹⁴ Ibid., 18

bers of that Association. It was not a resolution or law, pro or con on slavery, according to him. Littell also believed that slavery was a political problem and that the national government would have to act on the matter.¹⁵

Scott was relieved to know that the Silver Creek Association had not attempted to pass law, but placed slavery in its proper political setting. He observed that:

Slavery is a political evil, depending for its existence on the national law; and therefore let the nation look to it. God will judge us for making those laws which have brought slavery into being; and Christ will judge those of his disciples who have slaves and act incongruously to the relation which subsist between master and slaves.¹⁶

Field responded to Littell by defending his statement about the Association by reference to his sources of information.¹⁷ Then he asked Scott if he thought that the masters in the Long Run Association had made any improvement.

Do you believe that after a labor of ten years that the contemplated amelioration has been realized? Do you find the Christian master diligently engaged in teaching his slaves to read the word of life?¹⁸

Or were they still treated as chattel, bought and sold?

Field noted that preachers coming to Indiana from Kentucky had

¹⁵ A. Littell to Nathaniel Field, in Evangelist (February 2, 1835), 40.

¹⁶ Field, op. cit., (February 2, 1835), 40. ¹⁷ Ibid., (March 2, 1835), 77.

¹⁸ Ibid., 79.

been known to speak of advertisements for run-away slaves who were not their own. This, he thought, did not show any improvement in the situation as it had existed in 1825.

Field had a plan for emancipation which was not as radical as one might expect from the tone of his letters. The proposal was one which Field thought faultless. He proposed that each master who was a Reformer call his slaves together and announce that he was going to free all those who were twenty-one or over. Since they would have to leave the state and move elsewhere, he suggested Canada or Mexico; since they would need money, the master should suggest that he would pay his slaves for their work. When they had enough he would then give them certificates of manumission. Those under age would be treated fairly and educated until they were of age. Those who preferred to remain would be treated properly and rewarded for their toil.¹⁹

The chief defect Scott found in the plan was that it was too limited. He pointed out that if all the reformers immediately freed their slaves on the spot, this would not end slavery. Not all slaveholders were reformers.²⁰ Scott believed there was no use freeing only the slaves held by the Disciples. This raises the question whether Scott was really in favor of emancipation at all. Field pointed out in a later

¹⁹Nathaniel Field, "A Plan of Emancipation," Evangelist (April 6, 1835), 80.

²⁰Field, op. cit., in Evangelist (April 6, 1835), 84.

letter that at least it would be a start and would eliminate the problem for the Disciples.²¹ The rest of society would have to develop its own plan. He again noted that horse-racing was legal but this did not mean that Disciples could participate or had to participate in it. Those who did participate could answer that it was a political evil and not religious. Field thought the Disciples should eliminate the evil among themselves, regardless of what others did.²² Scott made no response to this argument.

Throughout the exchange Field attempted to make Scott an antagonist. This Scott did not want to appear to be. He told Field that he was in basic agreement with his ideas and would publish anything Field would write as long as it was not in objectionable language.²³

Scott attempted to defend the slaveholders by trying to explain to Field that the problem was complex. Some of the wisest men in the nation had been trying to solve the problem, but had not come up with a solution. So far as Scott could see, slavery could be eliminated only by some act of providence. If Field were to investigate the subject he would find that the silence on the subject by the editors of the brotherhood was no indication that they were friends of the institution. Scott

²¹ Ibid., (June, 1835), 141.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 141-143.

regretted slavery having come into being and deplored its present existence, but he was "silent because(he)think(s) to speak would be folly." ²⁴ Because Scott did not think he could say what ought to be said, he left the matter to those like Field who had some insight on the problem.

Scott attempted to make it clear that he did not consider himself an apologist for slavery nor was he an abolitionist. He did not believe that slavery should go hand in hand with the gospel. He was "willing that slavery should be thought and spoken of correctly, comprehensively, and according to its proper nature, as a matter of fact question." ²⁵

Although Scott opposed slavery, he did not think it was forbidden in the Bible. As evidence he cited I Corinthians 7:22.

For He who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ.

He challenged Field to point out a passage in the Bible to support his views.

Scott was of the opinion that laws must be adopted in the slave states, aimed at the abolition of slavery. Abolition could be accomplished only on a political basis and without the interference of religion. No amount of agitation in the non-slaveholding states would bring it about. ²⁶

Scott made a distinction between religious and political evil,

²⁴ Ibid., (October 6, 1834), 234. ²⁵ Littell, op. cit., 39.

²⁶ Field, op. cit., (February 2, 1835), 40-41.

and he noted that not all evil was sin. Field had earlier charged "that the slavery of the United States had no parallel for cruelty and crime, in the annals of sacred history . . . " ²⁷ Following his own line of reasoning, Scott held that slavery had originated with the government and only the government could act on it. ²⁸

Field took exception to this idea of Scott's. He thought that although slavery originated with the state, the church did have some responsibility in the cure. Being a physician, Field drew an analogy from medicine. He pointed out that the origin of a disease may have nothing to do with the cure. The physician can cure a disease without knowing the origin. He noted also that the state allowed the practice of slavery, but did not compel it. ²⁹

Field did not think Scott's use of the passage, cited from I Corinthians 7, was in context. Field thought that verse 23 b, "do not become slaves of men," should have been included in the quotation. ³⁰

Scott had cited the letter of Paul to Philemon concerning Onesimus. If this were to be used as evidence of Biblical support for slavery, then slavery as practiced in the United States had to be the same kind as that of the first century. This Field did not think was the case. ³¹

²⁷ Ibid., (March 2, 1835), 77. ²⁸ Ibid., (April 6, 1835), 82-83.

²⁹ Ibid., (June, 1835), 138-139. ³⁰ Ibid., 140. ³¹ Ibid., 138-139.

The influence of Alexander Campbell is shown in Field's suggestion that Scott should write an essay supporting the proposition that Onesimus was a slave in the American sense, and that Field would write one holding Onesimus was not; and that both be submitted to Campbell for judging. Should Campbell accept Scott's essay, Field would rest his case.³²

Because Field, at the beginning of this exchange of letters, had been afraid that Scott would not publish his letters in The Evangelist, he offered to pay to have them published. Field also wanted his name removed from the mailing list if Scott would not join in the crusade against slavery. After further thought, Field said that he would allow his name to remain on the mailing list if Scott would publish Field's views at Field's expense and over his own name.³³ Field's fear that he could not get his abolitionist ideas before the brotherhood were not unfounded. Campbell had refused to discuss the issue. This refusal on the part of the editors of the brotherhood led to the founding of a Disciple abolitionist press.

This exchange indicated that some Disciples were holding views which were already dividing them from their Southern slaveholding brethren. Although only one church was involved, it is unknown just how many others were thinking along the same lines at this time. The

³² Ibid., 140. ³³ Ibid., (October 6, 1834), 233.

exchange also indicated that Campbell had reason to become concerned that any discussion of the matter in the press might lead to division. As has already been seen, Campbell thought there was too much heat at this time for rational discussion.

This exchange also indicated something of the future form the discussion was to take, as well as the arguments to be presented. The discussion was not between the radical slaveholders and radical abolitionists, but between the middle-of-the-road pro-colonization anti-slave group, and the milder abolitionists. In time the abolitionist group moves more toward the radical side, but never completely. One side held to the rules of literal Biblical interpretation laid down by the Campbells, while the other side moved to a more liberal interpretation.

Actually, Field and Scott were on the same side of the issue. Their differences were in the interpretation of the Bible. The matter of slavery being a sin or not was a major difference. This pattern generally held true for the discussion which occurred on this subject in the years following 1835.

CHAPTER V

THE 1840'S

PERIOD OF ABOLITIONIST GROWTH

The 1840's were years in which the slavery controversy deepened on the national scene. The admission of Texas was opposed by freesoilers. Many were opposed to allowing slavery in the land won from Mexico as the result of the war. The anti-slavery Liberty Party showed some growth, but was superseded by the free-soil movement with its demand that the expansion of slavery be stopped.¹ Disciples became active in these political organizations. One, Leicester King, was Liberty Party candidate for Governor of Ohio in 1842 and 1844, and was nominated for vice-president of the United States in 1848, although he declined.² In this period the Disciple abolitionists became more vocal and their number increased.

One of the first important expressions of abolitionist sentiment by Disciples appeared in 1841, in the Address to Disciples on the Sin of Slavery, published by a group of churches on the Western Reserve.

¹ Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), I, 6-9, 144, 203.

² The Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery (Cincinnati: Western Biographical, 1883), I, 545.

It appears that this statement was widely distributed and was reprinted once in The Liberty Herald, an abolitionist newspaper published at Warren, Ohio.³

The burden of concern in the Address was proving slavery to be a sin. It approached the problem by giving nine reasons for so considering slavery.

The first was that "all hypocrisy is sin." Slavery was hypocrisy because the nation made much noise about its freedom on July 4, while at the same time it kept three million in chains. Such action, the Address said, showed to the world that Americans were hypocrites and thus sinners.

The second reason slavery was a sin was that it came out of violence. Only by violence could men be subjected to slavery and their freedom taken from them. In modern civilization and in Christianity, such actions were considered as piracy.

"The great cardinal question is -- Is it right for man to hold property in man?"⁴ This third point asserted that if such action were right, then it was right for one of two reasons: God had authorized it, or "the physical, intellectual or moral good" overbalanced the evil of

³ Liberty Herald (August 20, 1845).

⁴ An Address to the Disciples on the Sin of Slavery by the Churches in Trumbull County, Ohio and Vicinity (Cincinnati: W. L. Mendenhall, 1841), 5.

the institution. The writers did not believe that American slavery was authorized in the Word of God, nor did they accept the view that any good in the system overrode the evil.⁵

They thought that slavery was opposed to the common right which the Creator had given all men -- the right to himself. In slavery the right to one's self was denied and the slave was subject to the will of another in all that he was, did, or had. The argument proceeded to show that one's ownership of one's self was the basis for property and that if one could not own one's self, man could own nothing.

It was felt that if it were right for one man to hold another as property, then all men had this right. And if this were the case, then, as times changed, the present slaves could become the masters and the present masters the slaves. Should this occur the golden rule would impose on present masters the same treatment they were then meting to their slaves.

⁵ This statement was signed by the following ministers and evangelists on behalf of the churches concerned: Cyrus Bosworth and Jonas Hartzel, from Warren; John Ferrell, Macy Fisher and William Cunningham, from Fairfield; Aaron Davis and Calvin Smith, from Bazetta; George Bushnell and Alexander Spears, from Hartford; Joshua Carle and Samuel Burnett, from Austintown; Robert Smith, Moses Haskell and Robert Tait, from Lordstown; Anson Hatch and Abijah Lee, from Farmington; Wesley Lanphear and John Kirk, from Youngstown; Stephen Lanphear, from Suffield; Bela Hubbard, from Randolph; Marcus Bosworth and Horton Weston, from Newton Falls; Cyrus McNeely, from Green, Harrison County; and William Hayden, John Henry, Harvey Brocket, J. A. Ford, Warrick Martin, William Collins, A. B. Green, who were evangelists.

The law of nations considered the stealing of Africans from their native land as piracy. The United States had become a party to this agreement,⁶ and such an agreement was based "upon the principle, that man has a right to himself, and consequently to his freedom."⁷ As a part of their sixth point, the authors held that the church of Christ had become involved in every crime through her support of slavery and her "garments (are) dyed in blood."⁸

It was argued that man was intended for improvement, happiness, and heaven. Slavery, however, prevented improvement and denied happiness; it "palsie(d) the powers of the soul -- and degrade(d) man to a brute."⁹ Slavery required that the slave remain in ignorance and ignorance prevented improvement and happiness.

Slavery was considered as repugnant to Christianity. The commandment to love one's neighbour as one's self was quoted and the question asked:

Can slavery be reconciled with a supreme love to God, and a love to your neighbour as yourself? . . . Is there manifested any love to God or man in causing these human beast (sic) to toil under the lash, or crowd the markets of slavery, in chains? ¹⁰

⁶ Probably a reference to our agreement with the British in the Treaty of Ghent. See Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (New York:Henry Holt, 1947), 168.

⁷ An Address to the Disciples, 7.

⁸ Ibid. ⁹ Ibid. ¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

Questions were raised about how Christian it was to disrupt the slave's family life by selling members of the family. Hatred was seen involved in a system that originated in violence; and hatred, according to the Bible, was sin. The authors did not believe that slavery was motivated by love in any way.

The final point was the worth of man as man. To sell a man as chattel and as a beast was to deny him his worth as a man. In addition to this, to own a man was to set oneself up as God. Only God could own man, Campbell had said.¹¹ The reader was reminded that in aspiring to be God, angels fell. The same would surely happen to man.

This Address contained, for the most part, the arguments used by Disciple abolitionists generally in this and the following period. They expanded these ideas and on occasion added others. In 1845 this was considered as representative of the Disciple abolitionists' views and was reprinted in The Liberty Herald, as has been indicated.

Although it appears that the Disciples on the Western Reserve were discussing the slavery issue in the early 1840's, Alexander Campbell did not mention the subject publicly until February, 1845. By this time the issue was about to divide the Baptist and Methodist churches. Their discussion probably led him to make a statement of his own.

¹¹ Ibid.

In February, 1845, he began to run a series of eight articles under the title, "Our Position to American Slavery." He pointed out at the start of this series that the Disciples were the only religious body whose principles could save them from division, if they did not abandon them. The word "Our" in the title of the series was probably used to give the impression that his was the "official" position of the Disciples.

Also, at the beginning of the series, Campbell pointed out that Americans held that men were born free and equal, and the nation guaranteed liberty to all in speech, thought, and action. This freedom he felt could be used for the salvation of men and the nation, or for evil.¹² He did not think that anything could arrest the career of freedom of speech, and it was because of this that he was going to "do homage to his Majesty FREE DISCUSSION"¹³ and discuss slavery.

Campbell saw only two parties involved in the discussion, the abolitionists or "Liberty Men" and the "Non-Liberty Men."¹⁴ But the point of difference between them was not simply liberty and slavery. It was "the alleged political and moral evils of the system. . . (which) constitute the main topic of debate. . ."¹⁵ However, Campbell was going to turn to the moral area for his discussion, since it was the area

¹² Alexander Campbell, "Our Position to American Slavery," Harbinger (February 1845), 49.

¹³ Ibid., 51. ¹⁴ Ibid. ¹⁵ Ibid.

which affected Christians.

As the starting point for his articles and as an example of Christian discussion of the issue, Campbell used Frances Wayland, of Brown University, and Richard Fuller, of South Carolina, both Baptists, who were carrying on a written discussion at that time. They had limited their discussion to the Bible, and so far as Campbell was concerned this was the limit within which Disciples could discuss the issue. The abolitionist position held that slavery was "not authorized by God:" and thus morally wrong, while the pro-slavery men held that it was given divine authority and was not immoral. That the abuse of the system and unjust laws concerning it were immoral, Campbell did not deny, but this did not affect the issue. The central question was: "What does the Bible teach on this subject?"¹⁶ Disciples were to limit their discussion to this topic.

Campbell began to develop his position in the second number of the series which appeared in March. He said that in the

Church at the beginning, there were masters and slaves--sometimes Christian masters possessing Christian slaves-- and sometimes believing slaves owned by unbelieving masters out of his church. . . . We, therefore, take the position-- that, AS CHRISTIANS WE CAN LAWFULLY, UNDER CHRIST, GO NO FURTHER THAN TO EXACT FROM CHRISTIAN MASTERS AND CHRISTIAN SERVANTS ALL THAT IS COMPREHENDED IN THOSE PRECEPTS. We have no authority, as Christians, to go farther. We have not warrant to

¹⁶ Ibid.

annihilate the relation; but we warrant, and are under obligation to enforce the precepts, and to see that the relative duties of both parties are faithfully performed.¹⁷

Campbell attempted to distinguish between the obligation and rights of citizens in the political realm, and the obligations and rights of Christians in the religious realm. This led to a dual morality, and led many to consider that he was pro-slavery. It is important to understand that Campbell made a complete separation between what one could do as a citizen, and what one could do as a Christian. Thus one could oppose slavery as a citizen, but as a Christian one could do nothing since the Bible said nothing against the institution.¹⁸ It is clear that Campbell had shifted his emphasis from what it had been before 1830.¹⁹

Campbell had a strong respect for law and order. This motivated in part his attitude on abolition. Although Christians disagreed with the law, he felt they were obligated to obey it. Since slavery was sustained by the law of the land, right or wrong, it was the obligation of Christians not to interfere with the enforcement of the law. A Christian could vote to change the law, but this was as far as he could go. To openly violate the law, as some abolitionists were advocating; and to aid others in violating the law, were acts which Campbell would not condone.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid. (March 1845), 108. ¹⁸Ibid. ¹⁹ See above, Pages 30-31.

²⁰ Campbell, "Our Position to American Slavery," 109.

The primary issue in the discussion was the problem of non-fellowship with slaveholders. Campbell did not feel that slaveholders should be excluded from Christian fellowship simply on the grounds they were slaveholders. The relationship of master and slave was regulated in the Bible and both were to be disciplined by the church according to these regulations. No man-made laws could be enforced which would deprive either master or slave of fellowship.²¹

Since the relationship of master and slave was regulated in the Bible, the question, of whether the relationship of master and slave is immoral, could be answered by Campbell's saying, "We are clearly and satisfactorily convinced it was not."²² He considered it a "sin against every dispensation of religion" to consider the relationship of master and slave a sin in itself against God and man.²³ He argued that since slavery existed among the people of the Bible, and since there were laws in the Bible regulating it, and none forbidding it, slavery could not be considered immoral or sinful.²⁴

It was Campbell's opinion that every relation between the master and slave was regulated by laws in the Bible, and if the Christian master failed to follow these laws, then God would punish him. It was the obligation of the Church to see that the relationship was regulated, so far as

²¹ Ibid. (April 1845), 145-146. ²² Ibid., 145.

²³ Ibid., 146. ²⁴ Ibid. (May 1845), 193.

church members were concerned, by the Bible. If slaves who were members of the church did not render the service required by their masters, they were to be eliminated from the church, and to be disciplined by Christian masters in any manner the law permitted.²⁵

Although Campbell did not think that Christians as such could engage in abolition activities, because it was political, he did believe that Christians and the church should take whatever action was necessary to protect Christian slaves owned by non-Christian masters. Christians could even "endeavor to have rigorous statutes modified or annulled,"²⁶ if they interfered with church attendance. He even thought that they should attempt to get laws which would assure fair trial for slaves where the death penalty was involved, and should stop the sale of slaves for debt and the separation of families.²⁷

Campbell reminded the Disciples over and over again that they needed to keep the non-religious parties, which they supported, separate from the church. He thought that being an abolitionist was no reason for disfellowship with non-abolitionists. The problem came, however, when men such as Jonas Hartzel, John Boggs, and Nathaniel Field declared that slavery was a sin. As long as Campbell allowed for individual interpretation of the Bible and had no creed, he was confronted with

²⁵ Ibid. ²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Ibid.

differences of interpretation, and this caused his conflict with the Disciple abolitionists. Campbell did not concede the rightness of their interpretation of the Bible. He admitted that his purpose was "to show that the New Testament does not authorize any interference" ²⁸ with the master-slave relationship, and to preserve the union between North and South. To require emancipation by Christian masters was to demand more than the Bible did, and to make this a test of fellowship was to transgress the law of Christ. ²⁹

Campbell did admit that he had race prejudice common to that time. He preferred the white man over the colored, the free state over the slave state, and had more pity for the master than for the slave. ³⁰

Campbell was convinced the abolitionists could better expend their time in seeing that Christian masters and slaves performed their duties to each other in accordance with the commands of the New Testament. This would improve conditions, not only of Christian masters and slaves, but of all others as well.

These obligations were partly listed and discussed, Campbell thought, in I Timothy 6:1-4. ³¹

Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may

²⁸ Ibid., 195. ²⁹ Ibid. (May 1845), 234.

³⁰ Ibid. ³¹ Ibid., 235.

not be defamed. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.

Teach and urge these duties.

In the last of the series Campbell summarized his position.

(1) "That the relation of master and slave is not in itself sinful or immoral." (2) That it was inexpedient as practiced in some parts of the world, because it was out of harmony with the moral view and advance of society, did not contribute to the prosperity of the nation, and because it placed on Christian masters burdens not easily carried. (3) The churches could not, in accordance with the New Testament, make the relation of master and slave a test of fellowship.³²

Campbell did not think the abolitionists were more moral or spiritual or just than anyone else. He warned them against the self-righteousness which was developing in their midst. He also warned them not to appeal to the citizens with the idea that by supporting abolitionism, they would be more acceptable in the eyes of God, or that they would become more honorable among men. This would be most injurious and such a fallacy might ruin their souls.

In the August, 1845, issue of the Harbinger, Campbell indicated that he had received much correspondence on this series of

³² Ibid. (June 1845), 262-263.

articles. He also gave notice that he was not going to allow discussion of the issue in the pages of the Harbinger. His reason for this was that such a discussion could only become "political," and he was not concerned with this aspect. He felt that the abolitionists were desiring to dismember the churches³³ and he would have nothing to do with this kind of activity. He indicated that his views were those of the Bible and therefore he saw no need for further discussion.³⁴

By September Campbell found that some response was necessary and he printed a letter from A. B. Green of Wadsworth, Ohio, one of the Disciple abolitionists, in which Green summarized criticism of Campbell's position. These criticisms were discussed under three heads. First, that slavery in the ancient past did not make a distinction as to the color of the slaves as was the case in American slavery. Second, that it was wrong to steal a man and sell him. Third, that a slave was either stolen or taken prisoner. American slaves had been stolen.³⁵

Campbell answered Green by saying that enslavement in wartime was by contract or covenant. Since generals agreed that they

³³ See Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 92-93, for Garrison's attack on the churches.

³⁴ Alexander Campbell, "American Slavery," Harbinger (August 1845), 355-358.

³⁵ A. B. Green to Alexander Campbell, Wadsworth, Ohio, July, 1845, Harbinger (September 1845), 418-419.

would kill or enslave if they won, an agreement was reached. In the case of a stolen man things were different, but American slaves were born into slavery and thus not stolen. Their fathers may have been stolen, but for Campbell this did not alter the case at that time.³⁶ Green thought it did.

Campbell's articles may have motivated Green to write to H. Brown of Western Star, Ohio, to whom he had promised to give his views on slavery sometime earlier. The letter by Green was dated October 16, 1845, and was therefore written soon after he had written Campbell. Brown sent the letter to the editor of The Liberty Herald who published it with the statement that Green was a minister in the Disciple denomination.³⁷

In this letter Green noted that people generally try to justify slavery by the law of nations, or by the Bible. He agreed that the relation of master and slave could be argued from both points of view, but this did not get to the heart of the matter. For him the question was "not 'was the relation in existence?' . . . but . . . what was the principle upon which the relation was entered into?"³⁸ The relation was

³⁶ Ibid., 419.

³⁷ A. B. Green to H. Brown, Wadsworth, Ohio, October 16, 1845, in Liberty Herald (November 15, 1845), 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

still the same, but the principle was different. Ancient slavery rested on justifiable principles, but American slavery did not. Facts concerning slavery, as Green saw them, could be listed under eleven heads:

(1) Slavery was not confined, in the past, to only one race or color.

(2) In the past men were brought into bondage for some injury to another man or nation. Misconduct was the cause of his slavery. Joshua 9:23 indicated this when it said: "Now therefore ye are cursed; and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen."

(3) Exodus 22:1 indicated that "if a man steals . . . he shall make restitution; if he had nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."

(4) War generally ended with the victor making the defeated slaves as part of the punishment for injury they had received from them. Numbers 34:18 supported this view. However, Green believed that modern nations had given up this practice.

(5) Persons in debt could sell themselves for a given period, but among the Hebrews those in bond for debt were free at the next Jubilee year. He cited Genesis 47:13-23 as an example of this.

(6) In New Testament times, according to Matthew 18:25, it was the practice of a creditor to sell a debtor's whole family should he not be able to pay.

(7) There were cases in the past when men who were not guilty of any crime were stolen and sold. Exodus 21:16 commanded that any

one who stole a man and sold him, was to be put to death. I Timothy 1:9-10 gave support to this law, in Green's mind.

(8) Green felt that in the past all nations had something to justify the holding of human beings in bondage. Usually this was crime or offense of some kind.

(9) That the Lord approved all this was not the case, even though no special laws were given. Deuteronomy 23:15-16 indicated this.

You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you; he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall choose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him.

Backing this up in the New Testament was Paul's command in I Corinthians 7:21 "But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity." Green emphasized that Moses commanded that slaves be protected against their masters.

(10) Green asserted that he could not find anywhere in the Bible justification for the enslaving of a man or nation not accused of some offense.

(11) He pointed out that in the past slaves were not made of only one color or nation, and that slavery was based on misconduct worthy of the punishment. But he could find no application of these principles in American slavery. Africa had offered no injury or insult worthy of slavery. The only claim America had to enslaving Africans

was that "Might makes right."

Green closed his letter by saying,

I cannot conceive a greater insult that could be offered to a nation, or to God, than the holding in bondage those who have done us no injury; and I have no doubt that God will severely judge this nation for this insult.³⁹

At this same time Disciples were discussing in the press the New Testament and its views of slavery from a position which was not in accord with Campbell's. Two articles appeared in The Liberty Herald, an abolitionist newspaper published at Warren, Ohio, and edited by William J. Tait who probably was a Disciple himself.⁴⁰ One of these discussions was a letter sent to John Kirk by Jonas Hartzel, who was the Disciple minister at Warren, and which was sent to Tait by Kirk. In his introductory letter to the editor, Kirk stated that his letter was "on the relation of Master and Servant, as developed by inspiration in the New Testament."⁴¹

In the early part of the letter we find that Hartzel at one time

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ The Tait family was prominent in the development of the Lordstown Disciple church in 1830 when the church was first formed; see Amos Sutton Hayden, A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875), 101. John Kirk addressed him as Brother Tait, a term usually reserved for ministers and members of the Disciple brotherhood. See Liberty Herald (August 13, 1845).

⁴¹ John Kirk to (William J.) Tait, in "Communication," Liberty Herald (August 13, 1845).

thought that the New Testament did sustain the relation of master and slave. This view seems to have been part of his thinking down to 1845 when a change of opinion led him to write this letter. The only passage which Hartzel cited directly on this issue was I Corinthians 7:20-24.

Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it; but thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, is the Lord's freeman: Likewise, also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

Hartzel saw in this passage two Pauline ideas. One was reconciliation of Christian slaves to their slave condition, and a second was to stop the extension of slavery in the church. The passage which says, "Art thou called being a servant (slave), care not for it," was no more than an admission that the condition was wrong, and the slave had to bear his injuries with "Christian magnanimity." The passage in verse 21 telling slaves to take freedom when offered, indicated freedom was preferred over slavery. Paul did not say that other relationships should be broken. Since Paul ordained that slaves should be free if possible, Hartzel asked, ". . . Could the master as a man or as a Christian, in justice hold his slave in bondage . . . ?" 42 Verse 22, he believed, supported the first idea.

In verse 23 we have the beginning of a passage which supports

42 Ibid.

the second idea. The statement that "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men," Hartzel thought was a prohibition. Those in slavery were told to gain their freedom if they could, and those who were free were told to keep out of bondage. In addition he believed that the passage applied also to masters, that is, if one were not a master, one should not become one. This, then, had an important influence on the extension of slavery in the church. It asserted that the "relation, so far as the present slaveholders will consent, be abolished, and let the relation be extended no further, let not the free either become slaves or masters."⁴³ If this were followed for a few generations, slavery would cease. Because of these statements, Paul was inclined in Hartzel's mind, "at least ninety-nine degrees toward the abolition of slavery." ⁴⁴

From what Paul had said, Hartzel concluded that Paul did not justify slavery, and that he did not allow the relation because he thought it was right. He permitted it because of circumstances over which he had no control. Like divorce, slavery was tolerated by the church although it was not right. Thirdly, since the doctrine of the New Testament had driven polygamy out of the Roman Empire, it could expel slavery. And had these laws been followed it would have kept slavery out of the church.

Hartzel said that if the relation were sanctified, he would not

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

speaking against it, because no objection would be possible. But slavery was a tree without good fruits. It had many anti-Christian features. American slavery assumed that the African was of an inferior race, but the New Testament did not take this position, as could be seen in the treatment of the Ethiopian eunuch. I Corinthians 12:12-26 speaks of the weaker parts of the body, but said they were not less honorable because of their weakness.

The publication of this letter led Hartzel to write an article in which he expanded some of his views. He also noted that the letter was reprinted in several papers, and he had received no adverse criticism of it at that time (November, 1845). This fact caused him to draw two conclusions: either the proslavery group deemed the letter unworthy of reply, or they could not meet the arguments.

In this article he told his readers that the letter to the Corinthians contained the answer Paul offered for the questions asked of him. We can arrive at the questions only from the answers. There seems to have been, in Hartzel's mind, three questions concerning three relationships. One was that of husband and wife, second was that of Jews and Gentiles, and the third was that of master and servant. Paul told husbands not to leave their wives. He said that the relation of Jew and Gentile did not exist in the church. The important relation for this discussion was that of master and slave, and it received attention in the discussion.

Of the three relationships Hartzel said:

of the first he (Paul) says, it is right, it is sanctified; let not the believer dissolve it:--of the second he says, it is a matter of sheer indifference, and let there be no trouble about it:--of the third he says, Hear! Hear! "if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." 45

This relation was to be dissolved if possible and not expanded further. He expanded what he had had to say in the letter concerning the fact that the relation was tolerated. He noted that to be tolerated meant that something was allowed which was not approved. In support of this position he quoted from a letter of Thomas Campbell to Cyrus McNealy,⁴⁶ which asserted that God made slavery a matter of special legislation as he did divorce. This confirmed Hartzel's belief that slavery, like divorce, was an evil and the Bible recognized it as such. But the slavery recognized in the Bible was not American slavery.

The second subject Hartzel expanded was Paul's being "ninety-nine degrees" in favor of abolition. Here his argument failed to support his contention. His evidence was based on a statement made by Edward Gibbon in which he said,

Whatever restraints of age, of forms, or numbers, had been formerly introduced to check the abuse of manumissions, and

⁴⁵ Jonas Hartzel to (William J.) Tait, Warren, (Ohio), Oct (ober) 30, 1845, in Liberty Herald (November 1, 1845).

⁴⁶ Thomas Campbell to Cyrus McNealy, Pleasant Hill, (Pennsylvania), August 11, 1841, in Harbinger (January 1845), 3-8.

the too rapid increase of vile and servile Romans he (Justinian) finally abolished, and the spirit of his laws promoted the extinction of domestic servitude But the hardships of this dependent state were continually diminished by the influence of government and religion and the pride of a subject was no longer elated by his absolute dominion over the life and happiness of his bondman.⁴⁷

Hartzel thought the religious influence was that of Paul coming through the church. He then contended that if Christianity had had this influence on ancient Rome, the same influence could be asserted at that time in America. Modern rulers were a thousand years behind the times because instead of passing laws to free slaves, as he thought the Romans had done, the government was passing laws to hinder the freeing of slaves. Referring to Roman history again, he noted that Christianity had just become the major religion and it acted upon the government in such a way as to cause the elimination of this evil. He closed the article by calling on all Christians to bring pressure so that this evil could be eliminated in the United States.⁴⁸

That the controversy was strong at this time was indicated by further articles on the matter in the Harbinger, and by criticism of Campbell in The Liberty Herald. One case of local controversy over the matter was reported to Campbell by Elder Winans of Jamestown,

⁴⁷ Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London: Methuen, 1925), III, 502-503.

⁴⁸ Hartzel, op. cit.

Ohio. Two members of his church had withdrawn because they found that very few members of the church considered slavery as evil. Since they considered it a sin, and since Jesus commanded "to make no compromise with sin," they felt they should withdraw. In his defense before Campbell, Winans indicated that he pointed out to these people that no slaveholders were members of the church, and that the Revelation of John indicated that each church would be held accountable for its own actions; therefore, if the churches in the South did not take action on the matter, they would have to answer.⁴⁹

Campbell's series received attention in the abolition press on the Western Reserve. The Disciples in that section felt that they had to publicly indicate that Campbell's remarks were not expressions of the beliefs of all Disciples. In The Liberty Herald there were two notices to this effect. The Address by the churches of Trumbull County, discussed above, was reprinted along with some comments on Campbell's articles.⁵⁰

The editor stated that he did not have space for too long an article on Campbell, but could offer a few remarks. He thought that Campbell was wearing two faces: one which said what the South wanted to

⁴⁹ M. Winans to Alexander Campbell, Jamestown, Ohio, September 25, 1845, in Harbinger (November 1, 1845), 505-507.

⁵⁰ Liberty Herald (August 13, 1845).

hear, that slavery was not a sin; the other which said what the North wanted to hear, that slavery was out of step with the modern age.

Campbell, in the mind of the editor, said that the institution would come to an end without outside help, and that "all Christian men mind their own business!" 51

The editor made some pointed remarks to Campbell.

We pretend not to be so deeply versed in ecclesiastical matters, as to be able to say, whether this injunction is orthodox or civil, not what is the business of all Christian men, or whether Christian Editors only have a right to exhort, admonish, reprove or rebuke sin and sinners; but in conclusion at this time, and at this point, we will read Mr. Campbell (who no doubt holds to a man's speaking, if at all, as the oracles speak), and Paul in juxtaposition, viz:

PAUL-- We beseech you brethren to do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you. --I Thes., 4 Chapt.

A. CAMPBELL-- Let all Christian men mind their own business.

We will venture to assure Mr. C., that when he shall have influenced his Southern brethren, all to do their own business working with their own hands, as Paul has commanded; his Northern brethren not only do their own business, as heretofore, but MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS," provided always, it be understood, that they for themselves, and not he for them, shall judge and decide, what is their BUSINESS! 52

By the middle of the 1840's, it had become apparent to some that Campbell was in some ways taking a different line or had changed his emphasis when contrasted with his views of the early 1830's. A

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid. See also Liberty Herald (September 10, 1845) for more remarks on Campbell.

correspondent, S. York, of Eeger County, Illinois, brought this to Campbell's attention. York reminded Campbell that in 1832 he had described slavery as,

That largest and blackest blot upon our national escutcheon, that many-headed monster, that Pandora's box, that bitter root, that blighting and blasting curse, under which so fair and so large a portion of our beloved country groans . . .⁵³

However, by 1845, it was no longer considered a sin and was sanctioned by the Bible. York pointed out to Campbell that his critics were now accusing him of making a "blighting curse" a thing which was "right."⁵⁴

In the response which Campbell made, the only defense offered was a simple statement that he had not changed his position.⁵⁵ Either Campbell failed to see that he had changed his emphasis between 1832 and 1845, or he refused to admit that he had. Campbell was not one to take the views of others under any circumstances and admit that they were better than his own.⁵⁶

⁵³ Campbell, "The Crisis," Harbinger (February 1832), 86.

⁵⁴ S. York to Alexander Campbell, Eeger County, Illinois, July 14, 1846, in Harbinger (October 1846), 593.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 593-594.

⁵⁶ For evidence of this see the Richardson letters in the P. S. Fall Memorial Library, First Christian Church, Frankfort, Kentucky: Robert Richardson to P. S. Fall, Bethphage, (Virginia), July 30, 1857; Harrodsburg, Kentucky, December 19, 1859; Bethphage, V(irgini)a, Dec(ember) 15, 1858.

The discussion of Campbell's views in The Liberty Herald indicated they were being presented to a larger audience than that of the Disciple press. It appears also that his views were well known in the British Isles before he made a trip there in 1847.

During his stay in Scotland, he was dragged into a controversy over slavery, something he had hoped to avoid. Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that two prominent members of a Congregational church at Leith had left it and joined the followers of Campbell. Jealousy among the clergy developed and a conscious attempt was made on their part to discredit Campbell in the eyes of the people.⁵⁷ Campbell was known to be from Virginia, a slaveholding state.

The plan of attack was to draw from Campbell some statement which would indicate that he was pro-slavery. In order to gain such a statement the Reverend James Robertson, the Reverend S.M. Kennedy, and a Mr. Hunter, were sent by the "Scotch Anti-slavery Society" to seek Campbell's views on the subject. Campbell, thinking that their conversation on the subject was only a friendly one, spoke openly about his feelings, indicating his reason for disapproving of abolitionism in both England and America. He indicated that he felt foreign interference in American slavery would only make matters worse. He does not

⁵⁷Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), II, 552.

appear to have made any statement approving slavery, but his remarks were used to make it appear he had.⁵⁸ Placards soon appeared saying:

Citizens of Edinburgh--Beware! Beware! The Rev. Alexander Campbell of Virginia, United States of America, has been a slaveholder himself and is still a defender of man-stealers!⁵⁹

This forced Campbell to make a public statement of his position.⁶⁰

Campbell had, at one time, been challenged by James Robertson to debate the issue of slavery, but Campbell, having a full schedule, could not take the time to debate orally, but offered to do so in writing. This, it appears, Robertson declined.⁶¹

On his arrival at the next appointment, Campbell again found the placards, and he addressed a letter to the Edinburgh Journal, stating that he would debate anyone of the subject of slavery between September 24 and 27, except "the Reverend James Robertson who was publicly censured and excluded from the Baptist Church for violating the fifth commandment in reference to his mother . . ." ⁶² This statement led to Campbell's being served a warrant stopping him from leaving Scotland and a law suit by Mr. Robertson for damages stemming from the letter in the paper. Campbell was required to give bond or go to jail. He chose

⁵⁸ Ibid., 552-553.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 553; Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁶⁰ Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, 552.

⁶¹ Ibid., 554.

⁶² Ibid., 555.

the latter to dramatize what he considered an injustice. The case finally was brought to trial and went in favor of Campbell.⁶³ The episode did afford Campbell much publicity at home. Why Campbell made the statement about Robertson is not clear, except possibly to retaliate for the placards.

A counter-suit was filed in Campbell's behalf, and he was awarded two thousand pounds,⁶⁴ but Robertson fled the country to avoid payment.⁶⁵ Campbell had said that he was not interested in a counter-suit.

The Anti-Slavery Bugle carried several accounts of Campbell's activities in Scotland. Most of the accounts were taken from Scottish newspapers, which differed somewhat from those given by Campbell and his biographer, Robert Richardson. The Anti-Slavery Bugle also carried the account Campbell had in the Harbinger.

In a public discussion of the matter reported in the Edinburgh Weekly Express, Campbell pointed out to the people that abolition could be carried out only on a state-by-state basis, something his audience appears not to have understood. In the discussion Campbell argued that the relationship between master and slave was sanctioned by the Bible.

⁶³ Ibid., 564.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 578; The Christian Age (September 1849), 143.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

He also is reported to have said "he would not sit at the table with a colored man" ⁶⁶ It appeared that he also said that Negroes were not permitted to take the Lord's Supper with whites in hot weather. ⁶⁷

The Glasgow Christian News suggested that Campbell's views on slavery were not well received in Britain and that he needed a "reformation" in this area of his thinking. The same newspaper reproduced a letter taken from the Edinburgh Weekly Journal which stated that Campbell was not consistent in what he was saying. The writers noted that Campbell had said in a letter they had seen, that he opposed slavery as being "impolitic, immoral, and irreligious." Also in the letter Campbell had said that,

I have never said that I would not eat the Lord's Supper, nor a common meal, with an African slave, on either political, moral or religious grounds . . . Our African brethren, in all churches known to me, eat the Lord's Supper at the same table with their masters. They may or may not sit in the same pew. ⁶⁸

Campbell's statement that slavery was ordained in the Bible, legal in countries allowing it, and that he would not associate with Negroes

⁶⁶ "American Slavery Defended," Edinburgh Weekly Express in Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁶⁷ Ibid. This differs from Lindley's statement that Campbell admitted Negroes to the Lord's Supper and to the church on an equal basis with whites; D. Ray Lindley, Apostle of Freedom (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), 124-125. See also "Cold Love for the Slave," (Glasgow) Christian News, in Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

because of their odor, was seen to conflict with the statement in the letter. It appeared to the abolitionists that Campbell was not consistent in his thinking, or really truthful. Campbell's rejection of Negroes on grounds of odor had the same effect as rejecting them for any reason.

In another article from the Christian News we find that the reason for the interview between Robertson and Campbell was to find out what effect Campbell's doctrines had had on his personal life in relation to slavery. The writer of the article thought Robertson had done a service to the people of Scotland by pointing out that Campbell's doctrines were ineffective against the sin of slavery.⁶⁹

In an extract taken from the Anti-Slavery Standard the central issue between the abolitionists and Campbell was over the teaching of the Bible on slavery. Campbell maintained the Bible did not command masters to free their slaves, while the abolitionists maintained "that the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, . . . frowns upon (slavery) and forbids it under the most terrible responsibility."⁷⁰

The abolitionists were of the opinion that Campbell misunderstood their actions in opposing him in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Campbell thought they were trying to stop the spread of Disciple ideas. This

⁶⁹ "Mr. Campbell and Slavery," (Glasgow) Christian News in Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁷⁰ "Rev. Alexander Campbell in Scotland," Anti-Slavery Standard in Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

was not their intention. Jealousy, which Campbell thought was their motive, was not the motive according to them. They were concerned with Campbell's defending slaveholders.⁷¹

Robertson made a speech in Edinburgh in which he indicated that his opposition to Campbell was based on Campbell's defense of slavery. Robertson sought objectivity by prefacing his remarks with an accurate summary of Campbell's religious views.⁷² Campbell appears to have grossly misinterpreted the motive behind the activities of the Scottish Anti-Slavery Society concerning him.

Although opposing Campbell's views, the Liberator acknowledged that Campbell preached the same doctrines in Scotland that he did at home, something others holding to similar views did not do. The Liberator felt that others had been inconsistent in their stand.⁷³

The dilemma Campbell was in over the slavery issue was summed up by the editor of the Anti-Slavery Bugle.

So far as we understand Mr. Campbell's argument, it is that Slavery is an evil, moral, political and social; and he would be

⁷¹ Ibid. See above Page 82, Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, 552. The contents of the placards posted in Edinburgh and Glasgow are reproduced in full in Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁷² "Alexander Campbell and American Slavery," Anti-Slavery Bugle (October 8, 1847).

⁷³ "The Scottish Abolitionist and the Rev. Alexander Campbell," Liberator, in Anti-Slavery Bugle (November 5, 1847).

very glad that Slavery could be abolished, but believes also that the justice of slavery is established by the Bible . . . ⁷⁴

In the same article the editor regretted that Robertson had prosecuted Campbell for libel over the letter Campbell published referring to his expulsion from the Baptist church. This suit lessened the effect of the abolitionist triumph over Campbell. Campbell's imprisonment awakened sympathy for him in many who otherwise would have thought he got what he deserved. ⁷⁵ The editor, on the other hand, thought Campbell had gone out of his way to insult Robertson, who was the secretary of the Scottish Abolitionist Society, and knew that he was the man referred to. It was hardly a Christian act. ⁷⁶ The editor did not defend Robertson's action which led to his expulsion from the Baptist church and told him that he should so live that such charges could not be placed against him. ⁷⁷

Not long after his return from Europe, Campbell found opportunity to again express himself on slavery. Anticipating that Kentucky was to rewrite her constitution, he published in the Harbinger for May,

⁷⁴ "Alexander Campbell," Anti-Slavery Bugle (November 19, 1847).

⁷⁵ Ibid. The Anti-Slavery Bugle carried extracts from letters and an article by Campbell from the Harbinger on the controversy in Scotland (January 28, and February 4, 1848).

⁷⁶ "Campbellism," Anti-Slavery Bugle (February 4, 1848).

⁷⁷ "Alexander Campbell."

1849, "A Tract for the People of Kentucky." In this he presented his arguments as to why Kentucky Christians should now act while they had the opportunity to rid themselves of slavery. In the early pages of the article he recounted his feelings at the Virginia Constitutional Convention in 1830; how he proposed that they do something about slavery at that time, and his feelings about the interference of abolition societies.⁷⁸ His basic arguments in the tract are two in number; one economic, the other moral.

The economic argument was one Campbell had used before in his discussion of the subject. He pointed out that economists judge institutions in terms of what effect they have on the wealth and development of a state. All the best economists of that time, he says, were opposed to slavery because of its adverse influence on the wealth of the nation.⁷⁹ Campbell pointed to the indications of the last three censuses of the United States as indicators of the effect slavery was having on those states which permitted it. He then presented a chart which compared Kentucky and Ohio in terms of the harvest for 1848. This chart indicated that Ohio had a harvest worth \$49,455,000 while Kentucky had a harvest worth only \$23,174,000. Ohio's harvest was worth \$26,281,000 more

⁷⁸ Alexander Campbell, "A Tract for the People of Kentucky," Harbinger (May 1849), 242-243.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 244.

than that of Kentucky. He noted that Kentucky was larger, and had better soil. Not only this, but Kentucky had been developed before Ohio came into the union and had five times the population of Ohio when Ohio was admitted. The question was--Why had Kentucky fallen behind? The answer, slave labor! ⁸⁰

Although Campbell devoted a few pages to the economic aspects of the problem, it was the moral problem to which he gave the greater amount of space and made his central point. This was the area where Christians were directly involved. He started the argument by noting that Paul had said that slaves should be free when they had the chance (I Corinthians 7:21). That it was the duty of Christian masters to teach slaves was seen in the command that masters must give slaves that which was "just and equal" ⁸¹ (Colossians 4:1). But laws existed which prevented the master from doing this. The most important part of the moral argument was aimed at the master's family, not the slaves.

Campbell pointed out that most masters had children of their own who came into contact with and under the influence of slaves. Since slaves were morally inferior and children imitate those by whom they are influenced while young, they were being influenced along lines of action which were morally wrong. Hired servants could also suffer from moral

⁸⁰ Ibid., 244-247.

⁸¹ Ibid., 248.

inferiority, but they could be changed when the defects were discovered, which was not the case with slaves. Campbell was of the opinion that children imitate the actions of Negroes more than those of hired whites.⁸²

Campbell again affirmed his belief that the Bible sanctioned the relation between master and slave, but he now pointed out that most Christian masters did not understand the command concerning giving that which was "just and equal." Although Campbell had opposed mixing politics and religion before, he was now telling the Christians of Kentucky they had the opportunity to "vote like Christians at the polls and demonstrate (their) love of liberty and right,"⁸³ by eliminating slavery from her soil. He also saw that such a move could influence other states to follow her example. He hoped that the majority would limit the days of slavery in that state.⁸⁴

How many letters Campbell received in response to this "tract" is unknown, but that he did receive some is indicated by the few he published. In the July issue of the Harbinger he printed a letter from Abraham Smith, of Smithland, Kentucky, and his reply to it. Smith, besides asking for discontinuance of the Harbinger, told Campbell to follow the advice he had given the New England abolitionists, to mind his own business.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid., 250. ⁸³ Ibid., 252. ⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Abraham Smith to Alexander Campbell, Smithland, (Kentucky) June 1, 1849, Harbinger (July 1849), 413.

In his response, Campbell pointed out that he did not write as an abolitionist or politician, but as a Christian to Christians, as a member of the church to members of the church. He thought that since as a Christian he was to do good to all men whenever the opportunity afforded itself, he was obligated to take advantage of this one, and speak on the subject. He stated that men must come to see "that slavery in Kentucky or America is . . . contrary to the general moral sense, the moral taste, and the spirit of the present civilized world."⁸⁶ He further thought "that slavery, as established by our laws,"⁸⁷ was not in harmony with the Bible. It must be noted that Campbell was not saying that slavery per se was against the Bible, but only the way it was practiced at that time. Here he was saying that American slavery was out of harmony with slavery as practiced in the Bible. There is a great deal of difference. The problem was that the laws of the states prevented the masters from performing that which was "just and right."⁸⁸

In the following issues of the Harbinger, Campbell printed another letter from Kentucky in which he was charged with being inconsistent in what he said in Scotland and what he said in the "tract." However, since the writer did not state specifically where Campbell was

⁸⁶ Alexander Campbell to Abraham Smith, Harbinger (July 1849), 414.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

inconsistent, he was unable to answer him. Campbell did print a copy of a letter to the Glasgow Examiner that he wrote while in prison in Scotland. In this letter he said about the same thing he had said in the "tract" concerning the moral injury which slavery did to both masters and slaves. This letter, he believed, was a summary of all he had to say on the matter.⁸⁹

Throughout the 1840's the Disciples became more aware that the slavery problem must be faced. Abolitionists among the Disciples were becoming more numerous and vocal. The stand of Alexander Campbell on the issue did not aid their relationships with groups which were anti-slavery. However, it was during the 1850's that the abolitionist Disciples made themselves known. Although the Disciples had avoided the crisis of the Baptist and Methodist churches in the 1840's, they did face a crisis over the matter and the crisis tended to develop along with the national crisis. The development of abolitionism among the Disciples will be discussed in the following chapters.

⁸⁹ Alexander Campbell to the Editor of Glasgow Examiner, Glasgow Prison, Sept(ember) 8th, 1847, in Harbinger (August 1848), 472-474.

CHAPTER VI

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW AND THE DISCIPLES

Although Disciple abolitionists were gaining in strength during the 1840's, they did not express themselves strongly until the 1850's. Nationally both the anti-slavery and the pro-slavery men were becoming more vocal. The tensions of the 1850's between these two groups grew stronger with the passing of time.

The Mexican War had brought under United States control land from Texas to California. Before the war was over, some in the North were concerned about what the new land would mean in the expansion of slavery.¹ This discussion caused concern on the part of many who were fearful that the nation was about to divide.² The threat of division led to the Compromise of 1850.

Although the Compromise of 1850 caused many to believe that the last word had been said on slavery,³ the Compromise only set the stage for the next series of crises. One section of the Compromise which created much of the new controversy was the Fugitive Slave Bill. The Disciples were involved in this controversy soon after the

¹ Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), I, 32-33.

² Ibid., 275-283. ³ Ibid., 349.

passage of the bill. In the North the abolitionists were out to nullify the law,⁴ and Disciple abolitionists gave their support to this action.

The Disciple abolitionists found that they could not get their views before the brotherhood through the existing brotherhood press. This led to the establishment of a Disciple abolitionist paper, The North-Western Christian Magazine, which later became The Christian Luminary.⁵ The Disciple abolitionists were then in a position to make their ideas known.

During this same period one finds that abolitionist sentiment led to the establishment of one school, North-Western Christian University, now Butler University, and contributed to the founding of Hiram College. It was not long after the establishment of North-Western Christian University that controversy broke out between Campbell and the abolitionists, which continued in some form to the Civil War.

The national controversy which affected the Disciples strongly was the Kansas issue. It was the Kansas Territory that attracted Pardee Butler, and the refusal of the American Christian Missionary

⁴ Ibid. , 353.

⁵ The Magazine was published by John Boggs at Cincinnati, 1854-1858. It was followed by The Christian Luminary, also published at Cincinnati by Boggs, 1858-1863.

Society to support him led to the formation of an abolitionist missionary society, and division among the Disciples over slavery.

One of the most disliked parts of the Compromise of 1850 was the Fugitive Slave Law. Many abolitionists and non-abolitionists were opposed to it.⁶ The Disciples found themselves divided over the new law, and in the early 1850's there was some discussion over the obligation of the Christian concerning such laws.

John Kirk⁷ wrote to Campbell on December 12, 1850, stating that he disliked Campbell's position on slavery. This led Campbell to write two articles in the form of answers to letters under the title of "Our Position on American Slavery." Kirk, in his letter, told Campbell that he was not going to patronize "priest nor paper" which were not anti-slavery. He also indicated (1) that on the Western Reserve Campbell's position was not accepted; (2) that these views kept many from taking the Harbinger who otherwise would; (3) that he opposed Campbell's teaching that one man could make merchandise of another;

⁶ See Nevins, op. cit., I, Chapter 12, for a discussion of the reaction to the Fugitive Slave Law.

⁷ John Kirk was one of the signers of An Address to the Disciples on the Sin of Slavery by the Churches of Trumbull County (Cincinnati: W. L. Mendenhall, 1841). At that time he was minister of the church in Youngstown, Ohio, and a long time anti-slavery man. In 1851 he was still living in Ohio, near Youngstown. In the 1850's he was involved in a controversy over the slaves of Dr. James Barclay, the first Disciple missionary, which caused trouble in the brotherhood, as will be seen.

(4) that he considered as heretical Campbell's view that ministers could own other men as property and there should be no disfellowship on this account; (5) that he thought slaveholders were "the vilest thieves and hypocrites that ever lived;" ⁸ (6) that he felt that after a slaveholder had "crept into the church," had been admonished to free his slaves, and refused, he should be treated as a horse thief; (7) that he noted that most Disciples in the South were slaveholders, which he thought wrong. ⁹ He went on to chide Campbell on the Fugitive Slave Law, which he assumed that Campbell favored. This led Campbell to write a series of articles on the new law.

In his reply to Kirk, Campbell hoped that Kirk would be "emancipated from the tyranny of opinionism." ¹⁰ He considered Kirk as a "miniature Pope" who considered himself infallibly right. Campbell accused Kirk of having a "perverted mind" and of being willing to "annihilate the Constitution of the United States" and Christ's Kingdom. ¹¹ Kirk's charges and comments went unanswered, however.

⁸ John Kirk to Alexander Campbell, Hacienda of Palestine, O(hio). December 12, 1850, in Harbinger (January 1851), 49.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Alexander Campbell, reply to Kirk, Harbinger (January 1851), 50.

¹¹ Ibid.

The Fugitive Slave Law was a matter given wide discussion following its passage in 1850. Campbell printed a letter from Samuel Church of Pittsburgh, as representative of his views. Church's letter began by citing I Timothy 2:1-2:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

With this passage as a starting point Church discussed the authority of government. His point was that since the slave law was passed by the government, which God commands Christians to pray for, it had to be right and should not be criticized or resisted. Church and Campbell did not think that Christians should resist laws considered to be unjust. Governmental authority was to be obeyed, since government was ordained of God. He feared that disunion would result if the course being followed at that time was continued, and he urged Campbell to speak out on the matter, since Campbell's influence would reduce discord.¹²

In his response to Kirk's letter, Church regretted that Kirk's letter had been published. This regret was based on fear that Kirk's views would be interpreted in the South as representative of the views held in the North.¹³ Kirk, Church finds, never lifted his eyes "from the

¹² Samuel Church to Alexander Campbell, in "Our Position on American Slavery," Harbinger (January 1851), 50-51.

¹³ Ibid. (February, 1851), 105.

contemplation of the odious features of the institution-- the breaking up of families and the whipping of women" ¹⁴ For this reason Kirk's language and reasoning were unsound. Church, although admitting to "odious features," did not see slavery as a sin. When the duties of slavery were faithfully discharged, the moral objections were removed, Church thought. ¹⁵ His condition "when" was the point which the abolitionists criticized. They were of the opinion that the condition could never be met. Thus the only solution to the moral problem was the elimination of the institution.

Church offered as his defense of slavery that the present generation inherited the institution and should not be held accountable for it. He proposed that people wait for the judgement and find out what God does at that time. ¹⁶ Following Campbell's earlier stand, Church stated that he was more sympathetic with the master than with the slave, since the master had greater responsibility.

Campbell's discussion of the slave law lasted throughout 1851. In the opening passages of the first article he noted that this law had caused more excitement than any other law passed by Congress heretofore. He was concerned by the number of religious and political meetings which were being held for the purpose of condemning the law. He felt that if the law was unconstitutional, the Supreme Court would say so,

¹⁴ Ibid., 106. ¹⁵ Ibid. ¹⁶ Ibid.

and if approved by the court, then the people could elect representatives who would repeal it. Under no circumstances did he condone open violation of the law because one did not approve it. Campbell's reasoning, based on the Bible, was that Christians are commanded to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and governmental powers are ordained by God.¹⁷

Campbell's views may have been good policy so far as avoiding anarchy was concerned; however, like many others of his time, he failed to understand the political situation. During this period a power struggle was going on in the government between the South and the North as to which section was to control the Congress. The South was attempting to retain its control, whereas the North was attempting to gain control. Although repeal of the law was in theory possible, it was impossible in practice as long as the South controlled the government.¹⁸

Campbell argued that it was a Christian's obligation to return a runaway slave to his master. Paul set the example in returning Onesimus. But much of Campbell's argument in the first of these articles was based on law. He noted that government required the citizens to obey its laws, good or bad. This was the only way government could

¹⁷ Alexander Campbell, "The Fugitive Slave Law," Harbinger, (January 1851), 28.

¹⁸ Nevins, op. cit., 6, 12-13.

function. There was a distinction between the civil and religious law. The civil law orders the social relationships but the religious law orders the moral activity.¹⁹ In the case of the latter, God is the authority, but in the case of the slave law the appeal was not to God, for this was not a moral law, but a civil one. Any runaway should be returned as the law required. The length of service required of him had nothing to do with the law. Campbell also included apprentices and others who were obligated for a given term under the law.²⁰

Campbell became very hard-hearted when he discussed the reasons the abolitionists were motivated to aid runaways. This motivation, he thought, came from pictures of the cruel treatment presented by such books as Slavery As It Is. Campbell held, however, that in such cases, those who obeyed the law and sent runaways home, were not responsible for the treatment they received on their return.²¹ Campbell differed from the abolitionists in his interpretation of Christian obligation to the neighbour. The abolitionists were concerned with the treatment of the individual and thought that removing the slave from ill-treatment was in itself a good act. For Campbell the good act was in obeying the law regardless of what it entailed. The treatment given was the responsibility of the person who gave it.²²

¹⁹ Campbell, "The Fugitive Slave Law," 29. ²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 31. ²² Ibid.

Campbell believed that the fugitive slave law was in keeping with the Bible because of its parallel to the commandment (Deuteronomy 5:21, Exodus 20:17), not to covet the neighbour's property. Campbell was aware of the commandment in Deuteronomy 23:15-16, "Thou shalt not deliver to his master the servant which is escaped from his master to thee." This, however, the reader was told, was for only a special situation and was not a general law. If it had been a general law, then Paul could not have sent Onesimus back.²³ The abolitionists among the Disciples did not think Paul sent Onesimus back; he voluntarily returned.

Campbell traced in great detail the history of slavery. Throughout his history of slavery, he tried to show that the Bible had many laws supporting and controlling it. The fact that these laws existed indicated to him that God approved the institution.²⁴

It was not long before Campbell was receiving letters in response to his articles on the new law. Campbell published a series of questions addressed to him by an unidentified writer who asked Campbell to make direct answers.²⁵ The first of the questions implied that American slavery was not compatible with Christian moral law. Campbell responded

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Alexander Campbell, "Slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law," Harbinger (April 1851), 201-206; (June 1851), 309-313.

²⁵ Ibid. (May 1851), 247.

by saying that the term "American Slavery" was a collective term taking in many kinds of slavery. But after accepting the common meaning of the term, he held that Americans had the legal right to hold slaves. Campbell thought that the Christian moral law meant the Ten Commandments and these said nothing about the master-slave relationship. The Ten Commandments were not what the abolitionists meant by the Christian moral law, for they usually had in mind the Golden Rule or Jesus' command to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). He asserted that (1) the relation of master and slave was set down by "divine authority;" (2) this divine authority was found in the Bible.²⁶ The supporting argument for Campbell's views came from the life of Abraham, who owned over 1500 slaves.²⁷

That Campbell considered the slave strictly as property has been indicated already in his attitude toward the responsibility one had toward a slave who might be abused if returned. He said if a man in the Testament killed his slave, he was punished because of the loss of money invested in the slave.²⁸ The same, of course, was true of Southerners who abused their slaves.

Campbell's attitude toward the slave is difficult to understand in view of his place of leadership and past activities in attempting to get slavery removed in Virginia and Kentucky. His statements were incon-

²⁶ Ibid. , 248-249. ²⁷ Ibid. , 250. ²⁸ Ibid. , 252.

sistent with his own action in relation to his slaves. There may have been complaints in letters to him, or he may have come to recognize that his position was too harsh even for the moderates. By the middle of 1851 he modified his views on the treatment of slaves.

In discussing the Apostles' views and teachings on slavery, Campbell quoted many of the better known passages dealing with masters and slaves.²⁹ In all of these he saw not only approval, but a definition of how the relationship was to be conducted. The command to masters was summed up for Campbell in one statement: "Be just and kind to your servants" (Colossians 4:1).³⁰ Campbell thought that the Golden Rule should be applied in a different manner from the way the Abolitionists wanted to apply it. Campbell's application did not start with the basic relationship, but assumed the relationship was itself just, and applied the rule from that point. Thus a master should ask, not if he would like to be a slave, but how would he want to be treated if he were.³¹

The case of Onesimus proved for Campbell that Christians were obligated to return runaway slaves. This was what Paul did in this case, and this was what was just in the American situation. Paul returned him because of Philemon's prior right to the labors of Onesimus,

²⁹ Ibid. (June 1851), 314-415. Ephesians 7:9; 6:6-9; Colossians 3:22-24; 4:1; Titus 2:9; I Peter 2:18-20, I Corinthians 7:22-23; 12:13; I Timothy 6:1-2.

³⁰ Ibid. (June 1851), 314. ³¹ Ibid., 315.

although Paul could have used him himself.³²

The inhuman action against the slaves was used by some as an argument against the institution.³³ Campbell admitted that the treatment was not what it possibly should be, but he did not think this a valid reason for overthrowing the institution. After all, he pointed out, husbands abused their wives and children, but this was no argument for the elimination of marriage.³⁴

As to the Fugitive Slave Law, Campbell pointed out once more that the Constitution of the United States required the return of slaves and that all law-abiding citizens ought to follow its dictates. He also argued that since this law of the land had not been declared unconstitutional, all citizens were to obey it.³⁵

Having emphasized obedience to the law, Campbell attempted to soften his statements on the law by offering the North a hedge. Why he did this is not clear, but it does fit into his literalistic interpretation of

³² Ibid., 316.

³³ The desire to disclose such inhuman action motivated Weld to write Slavery As It Is; see Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 139. Harriet Beecher Stowe used Weld's book to prove that her picture of slavery in Uncle Tom's Cabin was true, ibid., 73.

³⁴ Campbell, "Slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law," (July 1851), 387.

³⁵ Ibid., 387-388.

the Bible. He noted that many held that the citizens of the North were inhibited from showing acts of kindness to Negroes, but this was not the case. All the laws required was that one not conceal a fugitive in such a way that his discovery was prevented. This applied, in Campbell's mind, only after legal notice and evidence that the person in question was a run-away slave had been presented. "You may feed, clothe, and lodge him, provided you do not 'harbor or conceal him, so as to prevent discovery and arrest, after notice of knowledge that he is a fugitive.' " ³⁶

If Campbell was sincere in what he said here, then what he had said to this point could be considered a concession to the South. Following this interpretation, any abolitionists could stay within the law, and aid an escaping slave over the underground railroad to Canada at the same time. From this it would appear that Campbell was not interested in the spirit of the law, but only the letter. As noted above, this is reflected in his Biblical interpretation which on this whole question had been in terms of the letter and not the spirit of the New Testament.

Although it appears that Campbell was attempting to conciliate the abolitionists, he continued to think that the abolitionists had done much damage to the cause of emancipation in the South. He felt that prior to the advent of abolitionism the South would probably have adopted

³⁶ Ibid. , 388.

some system of colonization.³⁷ "And exactly in the inverse ratio of Northern interference, has that disposition diminished."³⁸ Campbell held that the North should have allowed the South to have her slaves. "Let them, on the present compromise, fill up their own territory, or emancipate them, as they please . . . "³⁹

In his last article on the Fugitive Slave Law, Campbell took as his starting point a sermon by the Reverend Nathaniel Colver, minister of the Tremont Baptist Church, Boston. The text for the sermon was Acts 5:28. "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men."⁴⁰ Colver, from this text, argued that when the law of man required action which was against the law of God, then the law of man should be ignored. He then pointed out cases in the Bible where this occurred. Among these were the cases of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusing to obey the law of Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel's refusal to obey Darius's command not to call on the name of God.⁴¹ Colver, being of the opinion that the Fugitive Slave

³⁷ Allan Nevins, a modern interpreter of this period, says that "Garrison's vituperative [words against slavery] . . . had some responsibility for the fact that . . . early in the century anti-slavery societies had been numerous in the South, by 1837 not one was left." Nevins, op. cit., 149.

³⁸ Campbell, "Slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law" (July 1851), 391.

³⁹ Ibid., 391-392. ⁴⁰ Ibid. (August 1851), 426. ⁴¹ Ibid.

Law was against the commands of God, held it should not be obeyed.

Campbell questioned whether this law was in fact against the laws of God. The abolitionist had, it appears, claimed that in complying with the law one would be sanctioning slavery; but Campbell asserted that the law was not against God, nor did compliance in any way sanction slavery.⁴² Colver offered as his argument the passage which says: "Thou shalt not deliver to his master the servant which has escaped from his master to thee" (Deuteronomy 23:15-16).⁴³ As a counter argument, Campbell offered the case of Onesimus. Campbell also held that the passage used by Colver could not be universally applied. He thought it referred only to slaves who escaped from heathen masters.⁴⁴

Only two other letters which took the opposing point of view were published by Campbell. Isaac Errett, who wrote soon after the series started, had been a minister on the Western Reserve for many years and knew well the attitudes of the people of that section, which constituted one of the strongest Disciple areas in the North. Errett took the position that he and those who agreed with him were those whom Campbell referred to as being possessors of a "high-wrought sentimentalism."⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid. , 427.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. , 428.

⁴⁵ Campbell, "The Fugitive Slave Law," 29; Isaac Errett to Alexander Campbell, in Harbinger (April 1851), 224.

This was considered offensive.

Errett asked nine direct questions of Campbell, but none was answered directly. He asked first if, " ' in religion, in faith, in piety, God alone is Lord of the conscience, ' does he include humanity in these terms?" ⁴⁶ Errett did so, and this led him to question how the Harbinger could doubt the view of "the absolute supremacy of the law?" ⁴⁷ If Campbell meant that the law of the land was to be obeyed only in so far as it was not contrary to the law of God, then Errett held there was no conflict between them. However, if Campbell meant that the citizen would no longer judge a law to be right or wrong, then a controversy did exist between them. ⁴⁸

As a second point Errett asked why the midwives in Egypt did not receive a lecture on law-abiding when they disobeyed the Egyptian law requiring the killing of male Hebrew babies? Why did not someone tell them they were not responsible for the murder of these children since they were obeying the law? Third, did Obadiah do wrong in hiding the Lord's prophets in a cave from Jezebel and Ahab? If "absolute supremacy of the Law" was the case, then Errett said these people did wrong. ⁴⁹

The fourth question was "what kind of relation is that which is 'neither sinful nor otherwise, in itself considered?' " ⁵⁰

As a fifth question Errett wanted to know why there should be

⁴⁶ Ibid. ⁴⁷ Ibid. ⁴⁸ Ibid. ⁴⁹ Ibid. , 224-225. ⁵⁰ Ibid. , 225.

alarm over the safety of the Union when the Fugitive Slave Law was broken, but no alarm when abolitionists were robbed, their press and life destroyed, when South Carolina imprisoned citizens from Massachusetts and imposed indignities on a commission sent to treat on the matter, when disunion meetings were held in the South? Where was the Harbinger's plea for prayer for the Union then?⁵¹

Errett inquired if concubines and secondary wives should not be included in the law.

He also asked if Paul would not be subject to a \$1000 fine and six months in jail if he "harbored" Onesimus in the United States?

Errett wanted to know if General Washington led armies into war, did such an action provide an argument for war?

His final question was this: because "the heritage of freedom we enjoy was. . . ' purchased with the life-blood of the good and the brave, ' what kind of an argument did that furnish for the 'absolute supremacy of the law?' " ⁵²

Although these questions were relevant to the other side of the

⁵¹ Ibid. Errett probably had reference to Elijah Lovejoy; see Barnes, op. cit., 162, the South Carolina Negro Seamen Act; see Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 152-153, and the Nashville Convention which was considered by some as a secessionist plot; see Nevins, op. cit., 318.

⁵² Errett, op. cit.

argument, Campbell did not think they were relevant to his "views or position, on either the subject of slavery or the Fugitive Slave Law." ⁵³ He said that he would treat the questions raised in their proper place. ⁵⁴ They were never brought up again in the Harbinger.

Although Isaac Errett never associated himself with the abolitionist Disciples, a second correspondent of this period, Ovid Butler, did. Butler's style was forceful and clear. His hope that Campbell would not get involved in the controversy had failed with the publication of the first of this series of articles. He thought the independence of the congregation of the Disciple church might aid the Disciples in escaping the controversy. ⁵⁵

Butler noted that his and Campbell's positions were far apart. He objected to the suggestion that those who shared his views favored "forcible and violent resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law." ⁵⁶ This was not the case.

As to the constitutionality of the law, Butler had his doubts, and furthermore, he did not think the morality of a law depended on it being constitutional. "I have a stronger and higher objection to the law. As a

⁵³ Ibid., 226. ⁵⁴ Ibid., 227.

⁵⁵ Ovid Butler to Alexander Campbell, Forest Home, (Indiana) March 29, 1851, in Harbinger (August 1851), 431.

⁵⁶ Ibid. See also the Harbinger (January 1851), 27.

man, and as a Disciple of Jesus, I am constrained to regard its provisions as violations of the principle of humanity," ⁵⁷ and as going against the law of Christ. His authority was his conscience and he found that he must follow its decisions, but he was open to enlightenment. ⁵⁸ Enlightenment, however, would have to be based on something more than the stock arguments which had already been presented. ⁵⁹

To change Butler's mind an argument would have to harmonize the law with the principle of universal brotherhood. The principles of universal brotherhood were, in his mind, the sum of the "Divine Philanthropy." It was the central core of the Christian revelation. ⁶⁰ Butler felt that the command to be subject to the powers that be was a divine command, but it must be placed in its proper perspective. He was of the opinion that throughout Jesus' ministry, he commanded the disciples to follow him by taking up their crosses, that is, "the voluntary embracement of a convict's death, under judicial sentence, for the violation of human laws." ⁶¹

Recognizing that Campbell's opinions had a great influence over the Disciples, Butler was concerned over what Campbell's ideas were. He did not want to see an influence which involved the "moral character and future destiny of this Reformation" ⁶² perverted.

Butler's view that universal brotherhood was the core of Chris-

⁵⁷ Ibid., 432. ⁵⁸ Ibid. ⁵⁹ Ibid., 433 ⁶⁰ Ibid. ⁶¹ Ibid. ⁶² Ibid., 343.

tianity was in sharp contrast to Campbell's view of a literal interpretation of each passage. This type of exegesis had been the point of departure for Campbell from the beginning of his ministry. The abolitionists generally followed Butler's view, but the anti-abolitionists generally followed Campbell's view. The difference will be seen in more detail in the examination of Jonas Hartzel's views.

Butler was not the only abolitionist Disciple whom Campbell recognized in the early 1850's. A. B. Green wrote to Campbell in July, 1851, asking three specific questions. Green would not accept Campbell's premise that what was legal was right. His questions were:

1. Though Abraham owned and bought slaves, yet did he, or the Jews by a divine permit from Moses, their lawgiver, ever sell their slaves to ungodly men? Or were they ever permitted to sell them to any person? ⁶³

In answering this question, Campbell said yes. But he noted that the answer could not come from some direct statement in the Bible, for none existed, but it came from the nature of the right to buy and sell which was sanctioned. ⁶⁴

2. Have we an example in the Inspired Volume, of either Patri- ⁶⁵
archs, Jews or Christians, selling their servants out of their families?

⁶³ A. B. Green to Alexander Campbell, Western Star, O(hio), July 21, 1851, in Harbinger (September 1851), 526.

⁶⁴ Alexander Campbell to A. B. Green, in Harbinger (September 1851), 528.

⁶⁵ Green to Campbell, op. cit.

This question Campbell interpreted to mean: can one sell slaves at all? He says that for them to be sold they would have to be sold out of their families.⁶⁶

Since Green's next question seems to be the same as the second, it appears not to say what he had intended.

3. Has a Christian the divine right to sell the husband away from his wife and family, or the wife from her husband and children, and then plead in self-defense, that he has a right so to do, alleging that Abraham bought and sold slaves?⁶⁷

This question Campbell answered with "an emphatic no."⁶⁸ However, a Christian should, when forced to sell a slave, attempt to sell so that the family would not be broken up. This, admitted Campbell, was one of the sorrows of slavery.

In closing his remarks to Green, Campbell told him that the only way slavery would be solved in the United States was through the program of the American Colonization Society. If the Colonization Society could not send the Negroes home to Africa, the Abolitionist Society could not free them either. The abolitionists might divide the country, they might "perpetuate eternal discords and hates; but they never can, they never will, in my judgement, abolish slavery in this New World."⁶⁹

One thing is clear from this examination of Campbell's writing

⁶⁶ Campbell to Green, op. cit., 529. ⁶⁷ Green to Campbell, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Campbell to Green, op. cit. ⁶⁹ Ibid., 530.

on this question, and that is that he did not please everyone on either side. His views were opposed by slaveholders and abolitionists alike. But those who attempt to walk between two hostile camps are bound to find opposition on both sides.

It is clear that Campbell remained hostile to slavery throughout his life. That he changed his mind on this is doubtful. However, it is clear that he did change his emphasis to meet the changing demands of the times as he understood them. It does seem that this change was more in favor of the slaveholders than the abolitionists. His position is easily understood when one remembers that he was a literalist in his interpretation of the Bible and this had been the basis for the whole reformation interpretation on all issues. Campbell had opposed everything from the use of the terms "reverend and Doctor" to missionary societies, which did not have a specific command for their use in the Bible. D. E. Harrell, Jr., notes that the conservative literalists tended to be those in the South who later became the members of the Churches of Christ. This group would include those in the North who were also opposed to the missionary society. The liberal element was represented by those who favored the missionary society.⁷⁰ In the North the abolitionists would have to be placed with the liberals. Their interpretation of the Bible,

⁷⁰ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., Quest for a Christian America (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 262.

which did not follow a literal but rather a "spirit of the Christ" type of interpretation, made them liberals. They did not oppose the missionary society, per se, but only its involvement in the slavery issue, and they raised no questions about the rightness of missionary societies when they formed their own in 1859. Campbell had come to favor the idea of a mission society by 1850, although there was conflict between him and others when it was formed.

In the conflict over slavery, Campbell, in most ways, represents the conservative point of view. The conflict between these two groups was, to a large degree, a theological argument. Those who opposed Campbell's stand on slavery were the liberal leaders of the church following the Civil War.⁷¹

The discussion of the Fugitive Slave Law was only the beginning of a period of abolitionist Disciple agitation. Disciple abolitionists became more vocal when a journal for the expression of their views developed in The North-Western Christian Magazine. One of the most prominent writers for the abolitionists was Jonas Hartzel. His writings and ideas of the 1850's will be examined next.

⁷¹ Ibid., 264-265.

CHAPTER VII

JONAS HARTZEL: DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

Although Jonas Hartzel, who had lived on the Western Reserve until the middle of the 1850's and then moved to Iowa, had spoken out against slavery and those who thought it was not condemned in the Bible in the 1840's, it was in the 1850's that he became the chief spokesman for the abolitionist Disciples. Like many Disciples of this time, Hartzel found himself engaged in debate¹ and discussion with those who opposed Christianity. Hartzel took the affirmative side in a debate with an infidel, Joseph Baker, which took place at Salem, Ohio, in July, 1853.² The next year Hartzel published the debate in book form.³ This debate and the resulting book were given notice in some of the Disciple papers.

Alexander Campbell in his report of the debate said that it was a "decisive triumph" so far as the issue was concerned. He thought the

¹ The debate between Alexander Campbell and Robert Owen is the best known. Other Disciples engaged in debates also; see Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 197-199, 305.

² There is almost no information about Baker available. The Anti-Slavery Bugle supported him in the debate.

³ Jonas Hartzel, In Defense of the Bible against the Charges of Modern Infidelity (Cincinnati: Columbia, 1854).

book should be given wide general circulation. However, Campbell objected to Hartzel's "meeting the objection of the law of Moses and the gospel, based on the system of servitude recognized in both institutions."⁴ Hartzel defended the Bible, Campbell noted, by not recognizing the existence of slavery in it, or its regulation "by divine statutes." Campbell cited, as an example, Hartzel's holding that Paul's words, "Masters, render to your servants that which is just and equal," as meaning these servants were not bond servants.⁵ Campbell argued that if this were the case, Paul would have said, "Masters, pay your servants their wages according to contract."⁶ Campbell felt that Hartzel's argument might be successful in Ohio, but that men of great scriptural discernment would regard it as a "special pleading, and a shrinking from the true issue."⁷ Campbell emphasized that this was the only defect of the book.

Campbell's review of the book also included some comments from The Christian Age's notice of the book. One comment on the book noted that Mr. Baker's objection to the Bible rested on Campbell and other preachers of great popularity who held that the Bible sanctioned slavery. Hartzel, the comment indicated, denied that this was the case.

⁴ Alexander Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate," Harbinger (August 1854), 473; Magazine (December 1854), 181.

⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid. ⁷ Ibid.

The Christian Age asserted that this "is a new feature in arguing the evidences of Christianity . . . " ⁸

Campbell took exception to Hartzel's argument about the Bible and slavery, and hoped this was "an unintentional misrepresentation." ⁹ Campbell said that this made it appear that he defended slavery, which he did not do. He did, however, maintain "against all opposition, that both 'Bible,' and 'the New Testament' admit and sustain the relation of master and servant for life." ¹⁰ It was at this point in the discussion that Campbell maintained that the matter of slavery reform was the problem of the "political Franklins, Washingtons, Jeffersons, but not of Peter or Paul, of Jonas Hartzel or Alexander Campbell." ¹¹

In answering Campbell's charge that he ignored the existence of slavery and the regulation of it in the Bible, Hartzel asserted that this was not the case. He quoted from the written report of the debate in which he said, the "religion of Christ did not forbid slavery in so many words, . . . but it did that which was much better," ¹² it told the slaves to be free if they could. The condition of freedom was for Hartzel a "justifiable desire," "and no Christian master could refuse to grant his slave a justifiable desire, and be guiltless, if duties are reciprocal." ¹³

⁸ Ibid. ⁹ Ibid. ¹⁰ Ibid. ¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. ; Hartzel, op. cit. , 257.

¹³ Hartzel, op. cit. , 262; Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate, 182.

Campbell had also charged that this view was "designed . . . for North-Western Christians." ¹⁴ But Hartzel stated that such was not the case, and that he would maintain in any "latitude" "that neither Moses nor Paul 'recognize' the relation . . . as a justifiable relation," ¹⁵ that is, they did not "sanction" such a relation. Hartzel took the term "sanction" to mean that one agreed with the idea, or supported it.

Campbell's position, as interpreted by others at least, was made clear to him by the editor of The Christian Age, W.W. Eaton, who contrasted the positions of Hartzel and Campbell. The Christian Age indicated that the common view was that Campbell held the Bible sanctioned slavery, and that Hartzel held it did not. Campbell at this point denied that this was his position. Hartzel pointed out to Campbell that most of his readers had for years thought that this was his position. Hartzel also indicated that Campbell was not sure of this position, since he "admits and sustains" slavery by the New Testament, yet holds that it is not "sanctioned" by the New Testament. Hartzel told Campbell that if he held that the New Testament sustained slavery, he must of necessity hold that the New Testament "sanctions" it. Hartzel, in short, maintained that Campbell was attempting to maintain a paradox. ¹⁶

Hartzel drew an analogy for Campbell to show the weakness of

¹⁴ Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate," 183.

¹⁵ Ibid., 182. ¹⁶ Ibid., 183.

his position. He pointed out that the church "admits" drunkards, but does not "sustain" drunkenness. The church may "admit polygamists to enter . . . but it never did sustain polygamy." The same is true of slavery; the church may admit the slave and the slaveholder, but it does not accept the relation.¹⁷

The most damaging question Hartzel put to Campbell was this: how could he say at one time that "slavery is the greatest 'of all evils' and at the same time "affirm that the relation is right?"¹⁸ He asked Campbell to explain this position.

The debate itself did not present anything that was new to the discussion of abolition among the Disciples. This debate probably served as the basis for the articles that Hartzel published in the Magazine and the Christian Luminary in the last half of the 1850's. However, he did summarize his argument in eight points.

(1) That Jesus gave the "Golden Rule" to his disciples and when applied to slavery it meant that if one enslaved other men, the same could happen to him.

(2) That Jesus held "genuine greatness" was to be found in humility, not in lordship.

(3) That the love Jesus spoke of was to be extended to all who were in need of it, regardless of their country. "Under the healthful

¹⁷ Ibid., 184.

¹⁸ Ibid., 185.

exercise of this principle, slavery never could have been born." ¹⁹

(4) The Apostles preached the Gospel to all nations, including Ethiopia. In doing so they commanded (A) Christian slaves to be free if they could, (B) Christians were not to be slaves of men, (C) servants should be free and free persons should not become masters, and (D) servants of unbelieving masters and "still 'under the yoke,' were to 'honor' them for the sake of the Gospel." ²⁰

(5) Servants of believing masters were to be faithful, as they were all brethren, and the masters were to do that which was just and equal. The use of the term "master and servant" did not necessarily mean slavery, since the term was also used to indicate the relation between employer and employee.

(6) Giving what was "just and equal" would more likely refer to employer-employee relations. Had Paul been speaking of slaves he would have required mercy.

(7) The Bible required honor to all men. This was impossible when one was holding part of the human race in bondage.

(8) The basic question that needed to be asked by those appealing to the Bible was "who shall be the slave?" ²¹ The Old Testament said those who had gotten into debt, and the heathen. But the New Testament gave no instruction on this matter.

¹⁹ Hartzel, op. cit., 276. ²⁰ Ibid. ²¹ Ibid., 278.

John Boggs, editor of the Magazine, published a letter from Hartzel, who discussed some of the things which had transpired between some pro-slavery men and himself. Important in this letter was a discussion of Campbell's stress on union in the church. Campbell thought the discussion of slavery would divide the church. Hartzel raised the question of whether or not the church was in fact divided. He thought the discussion of slavery indicated that union was "nominal rather than real." ²² There was no real feeling of fellowship between the abolitionist and the slaveholder. ²³

One big question before the brotherhood, Hartzel thought, was how to be rid of slavery. Discussion of this issue was necessary as there could be no true union of the church while this issue existed. "To express union where there is no union is hypocrisy." ²⁴ This was the first admission that underneath the denominational covering, strong elements of discord were at work among the Disciples.

²² Jonas Hartzel, "Fellowship with Slaveholders," Magazine (November 1855), 137.

²³ We have noted the Jeffersonville, Indiana, church's feelings on the matter. The Disciples at Chagrin Falls, Ohio, were soon to vote disfellowship with slaveholders, See Magazine (January, 1857), 207-208. The Christian Co-operation of the Western District of Ohio passed a resolution opposing the extension of slavery, Magazine (October 1856), 127. The discussion of disfellowship disrupted the Hartford, Ohio, church in 1847, See B. F. Perky to the Editor, Southington, (Ohio), Nov(ember)22, 1847, in Anti-Slavery Bugle (December 3, 1847).

²⁴ Hartzel, op. cit.

The question which followed was how union could be restored. There were two things Hartzel thought that could bring this about. 1st "If the brethren opposed to slavery will give up their opposition; or 2nd, our brethren who hold slaves, give up their slaves . . ." ²⁵ In deciding which of these alternatives the brotherhood should choose, he suggested that they ask, "Which is more desirable? Which would most honor Jesus Christ the head of the church?" ²⁶

The first would not do, he felt, because to give up this position without reason would be whimsy. It would in this case be against conscience: to do so would gain condemnation of him who "came to preach deliverance to the captive." But as to the second, he asked if those who have freed their slaves have been "disesteemed" for the act? "Have they disgraced Jesus Christ, the Church, or their Christian Profession. . ." ²⁷ All that was required was for the master to give up "his property right in human flesh." ²⁸

Hartzel drew an analogy between the abolitionist and the immersionist to show the abolitionist position. The immersionist cannot give up his belief and practice sprinkling because to do so would be to give up a principle known to be right. But sprinklers, like slaveholders, can give up sprinkling since they grant that immersion is right. ²⁹

He closed the letter by asking: "How then can we as Christians

²⁵ Ibid. ²⁶ Ibid., 138. ²⁷ Ibid. ²⁸ Ibid. ²⁹ Ibid.

take a passive position in relation to that 'which is the sum of all villainies,' 'the maximum of all evils?' " ³⁰

Although Hartzel and others could present arguments in favor of the abolitionist position, getting these arguments before the brotherhood was a problem. Hartzel divided the Disciples into four groups based on their view of slavery. The groups which did not support the Magazine were: (1) those who were pro-slavery; (2) the apologists for slavery; (3) the non-extension political abolitionists. ³¹ These three groups, "all agree that the ministry and religious press should not be allowed to agitate the question of slavery." ³² This left only a few to speak for moral abolition, and these supported the Magazine.

Concern over the failure of the brotherhood to give more support to the Magazine arose because of the failure of The Christian Age, the voice of the Missionary Society, to publish articles from J. O. Beardslee, missionary to Jamaica. The reason for refusing to publish the articles was Beardslee's unpopularity among the slaveholders. Hartzel believed that the editor of The Christian Age had sold himself and his paper for slavery gold. The articles intended for The Christian Age were published

³⁰ Ibid., 139.

³¹ Jonas Hartzel to John Boggs, Davenport, [Iowa], November 28, 1857, in Magazine (December 1857), 188.

³² Ibid.

in the Magazine, and Hartzel found the reasons why The Christian Age refused to print them were the description of slavery as it had existed on the Island, before emancipation in 1838, and progress of the Negroes since their emancipation. The Christian Age's refusal to publish had deprived the brotherhood of this information.³³

The depression of 1857 had an influence on most of the publishing enterprises of the Disciples. It naturally had its effect on the Magazine. Hartzel urged the patrons to continue their support, since this was the only anti-slavery voice they had.³⁴

Hartzel based most of his argument against slavery on the Bible, and it was natural that he should write a series of articles on slavery and the Bible. These articles which deserve consideration will be examined next.

³³ Ibid. ³⁴ Ibid., 190.

CHAPTER VIII

JONAS HARTZEL: SLAVERY AND THE BIBLE

The letters of Jonas Hartzel published in The Liberty Herald,¹ which were concerned with slavery and the Bible, have already been discussed. Ten years later Hartzel was writing two series of articles on this same subject, which were published in the Magazine. One was entitled "Primitive Christianity," and the other "Bible Vindicated." In both of these he presented his argument on the relation of slavery to the Bible and expanded what he had already said by adding some new passages of scripture to support his contentions.² In these articles we find that he took the favorite passages of the pro-slavery people and turned them into arguments for abolition.

In the fifth article of the series of "Primitive Christianity," Hartzel told his readers that a "christian is Christ-like;-- has the mind of Christ -- the spirit of Christ; -- will obey all his precepts and imitate his examples." ³ Everything the Christian did was to be done in the

¹ See above pp. 76 ff.

² Not all of these articles are available, since there does not seem to be a complete file of the Magazine, nor are all of these articles concerned directly with slavery.

³ Jonas Hartzel, "Primitive Christianity," Magazine(March 1855), 260.

name of Christ. Thus, if Christ gave a pro-slavery religion to the world, "those who call themselves by his name should show forth his perfections, advocate what he approved, practice what he preached, and give him the glory." ⁴ If this reasoning were sound, and he thought that it was, three conclusions had to follow: (1) Christians could obtain slaves by any legal means in the country where they lived. (2) They could treat their slaves according to what was legal without injuring their standing as Christians. (3) Whatever good that resulted from the system must be credited to Christ, just "as we accredit to Christianity the elevation of woman and the blessings of civilization." ⁵ This being true, it seemed difficult for him to denounce slavery as the "maximum of all evils."

If, he continued in a later number of the series, Christianity supported and sustained slavery, then Jesus was responsible, and Christians share in that responsibility. This being the case, then why should the "honor and dishonor" of the system be given to the "political Washingtons, Jeffersons, or Franklins?" ⁶ When the responsibility for the institution was shifted to the state a "false issue" was raised. Christian slaveholders did not need to appeal to the state for support or justification, since all they needed was the Bible. Christians were deprived of their divine right in the non-slaveholding state, if Christianity defended

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ibid., 260-261. ⁶ Ibid. (May 1855), 340.

slavery.⁷

Hartzel asked finally, could slavery as practiced in the United States have developed out of the Scriptures? Could it have survived without the aid of the civil magistrate? If it could, then Christianity sustained it; if it could not, then Christianity was not responsible for it.

Hartzel felt that slavery was not established by Peter or Paul. Slavery had come into existence long before Christianity, therefore, Christianity could not be the cause of it. Paul held that if the chance for freedom came along, the slave was to take it. This indicated that had slavery not existed the Apostles would not have called it into existence.

As the New Testament stood, Hartzel did not believe the statement that it "admits and sustains the relation of master and slave for life," could be proved. But if it could be sustained on the New Testament alone, without the aid of the state, he would accept it. He suggested the institution be tested by eliminating the support given it by the state and be allowed to function on the basis of the New Testament alone. If the relation of master and slave had been sustained in the New Testament, it would function at that time.⁸ Under such conditions he predicted it would soon become apparent that the New Testament did not sustain the relation.

The pro-slavery argument was centered largely in I Timothy

⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Ibid., 341.

and Philemon. Hartzel expended much time and space in arguing that these letters were anti-slavery. This view was central for the abolitionist Disciples' argument.

One of the passages used often by the pro-slavery people was I Timothy 6:1-11. In discussing these verses, Hartzel believed that a controversy was about to take place at Ephesus over slavery. These words to Timothy were to prepare him so that he would know which side to take. Hartzel thought that some doctrine other than that which Jesus and the Apostles taught on slavery was being pressed on the church there. This doctrine, Hartzel told his readers, was considered as abolitionist. This being the case, abolition came from antiquity. This was, in Hartzel's mind, "a reckless pro-slavery assumption." ⁹

He asked if "any pro-slavery D. D." had shown that Roman slavery followed the teaching of Jesus. If this were the case, he wanted to know if he had proved that American slavery was like Roman slavery.¹⁰ In the argument that followed, Hartzel asserted that neither of these could be shown or proved to be true.

Starting with the first verse of the passage in question, Paul said:

⁹ Jonas Hartzel, "Bible Vindicated," Magazine (January 1857), 210.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed.

For Hartzel the honor to the master was not given because of duty, but because the master would come to know God, and be won to Christ. The pro-slavery advocates held that Paul wanted the master honored because he was the master. Such an exegesis, Hartzel argued, would require the removal of the words, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed (defamed)." ¹¹ The doctrine which followed godliness, was one which required "the practice of love, mercy, justice, righteousness toward all men; these, with all other godlike qualities." ¹² These things slaveholders could not do, for to "love they neighbour as thyself," could not be applied when slaves were bought and sold, and treated like brutes. Hartzel questioned that love to another man was ever expressed by enslaving him. The "Golden Rule" also brought into question the relationship. But since slaveholders did not consider slaves as men, these things did not apply. ¹³

Supporting the abolitionist view, Hartzel quoted Luke 10:7, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." He asked for a like quotation from the Gospels which supported the slavery cause. This quotation was evidence for him that "wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ" favored freedom. The "doctrine" of the Great Commission was also thought to be

¹¹ Ibid., 221. ¹² Ibid., 212. ¹³ Ibid.

on the side of freedom and his opinion was supported by Elder Benjamin Franklin.¹⁴ He indicated that many slaveholders had been led to free their slaves after having read the Bible and this evidence from the "other side of the house" gave support to his views. Hartzel recalled that Paul held,

Those who will not "consent" to these Bible "preferences for freedom" over slavery, are "proud men of corrupt minds"--as such they are to be "withdrawn from." 15

The Bible said that "love worketh no ill to his neighbour." Hartzel interpreted this to mean, it "worketh" good. This raised the question of whether it was good or ill to enslave a man. The answer was so obvious that it did not have to be spoken, Hartzel thought. But he did recall the words of Paul to slaves, "if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." (I Corinthians 7:21). Paul's expression was that of moderate abolition. Hartzel thought that Paul also supported the radical abolitionists when he said "be not ye the servants (slaves) of men." 16

Shifting to a slightly different theme, Hartzel questioned how American Christians could make contributions to convert and educate the heathen, and yet make no effort to educate the millions of slaves at home. The answer was that Americans were "respecters 'of persons,'"

¹⁴ Ibid., 213.

¹⁵ Ibid. There seems to have been some controversy in the American Christian Review on this matter, for Hartzel asked the editor, Benjamin Franklin, to say yes or no to this view.

¹⁶ Hartzel, "Bible Vindicated," 213-214.

which was an ungodly partiality. Was the man who deprived another of all education except that which would make him profitable to himself, acting in accordance with the "doctrine of godliness?"¹⁷ "To advocate slavery, is to advocate the doctrine of partialism. . . (which is) a doctrine as unlike God as Christ is unlike Belial . . ." ¹⁸

Hartzel asserted that those arguing for slavery relied more upon the first four verses of I Timothy 6, than on the rest of the New Testament.¹⁹ Going back to his argument that the letter was to aid Timothy in combating the pro-slavery people, Hartzel cited two verses from this chapter to show the pro-slavery usage.

Any then that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. (I Timothy, 6:1-2)

In the first verse Paul indicated who the false teachers were from whom Timothy was to withdraw. They were those teaching contrary doctrine on the subject of slavery. Central in the argument here, was whether or not these persons justified Roman slavery.²⁰ Once this was determined, Paul's position could be seen.

Those favoring slavery had taken the position that the apostles were pro-slavery. Every doctrine, however, has looked to the Bible for support and justification. Hartzel believed that the pro-slavery teachers

¹⁷Ibid., 214. ¹⁸Ibid. ¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰ Ibid. (February 1857), 232.

of the early church followed the Roman slave code and its axiom, "that 'might gives right,' " and then attempted to incorporate this into the Gospel.²¹

This same situation was to be found among modern pro-slavery advocates. They appealed to the code of "kidnappers, . . . man stealers; . . . national and state constitutions; local slave laws; fugitive slave bills; . . . the courts, and a corrupt public sentiment."²² They also found support in the apologists for slavery who claimed they were opposed to slavery, but who also claimed that the Bible supported the institution. This idea could no more be supported from the Bible than sprinkling as a mode of baptism, Hartzel asserted. It was necessary to give a false interpretation of the "brevity of detail" which appears in the Bible on this subject to support such an idea.²³

Any attempt to support slavery by the Bible required special pleading; but Hartzel argued this special pleading was not required to show that the Bible was the friend of freedom. This was seen in "its motto . . . 'Glory to God in highest, on earth peace, good will among men.' "²⁴ Equality was stressed by the Bible in that all men "are equally guilty of sin: equally embraced in the plan of redemption; . . . equally eligible to . . . the kingdom of heaven."²⁵ The spirit of this motto was

²¹ Ibid., 233. ²² Ibid. ²³ Ibid. ²⁴ Ibid., 234. ²⁵ Ibid.

the basis for the work of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The advocates of slavery had three positions they could take concerning this motto: (1) They could deny that it was the Gospel, which would make them infidels. (2) They could hold that slavery was in keeping with it, which would lead other men to laugh at them. (3) The position they would take was that it was the true Gospel, with certain exceptions in Paul and Peter, touching on slavery.²⁶ Hartzel then asked, what effect would this have on the Gospel? It meant that the Gospel taught both good and ill will among men, both freedom and slavery.

These teachers would not admit that there was a possibility that they had made a mistake in interpreting a few short passages, even though such interpretations were out of balance with the rest of the Bible. Hartzel believed that they had gotten their system outside the Bible, and now were seeking to get the Bible to "canonize" it. However, he would like to hear the pro-slavery defenders admit this "for their sake." "For to us it appears a little too coercive to require Heaven to father, and the Church to nurse the child begotten by the Devil (pirates). . . ." ²⁷

To go back to the argument, Hartzel said that if they, the teachers whom Paul wanted Timothy to avoid, were anti-slavery, then Paul was pro-slavery. Paul, Hartzel admitted, did not actually say that they

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

were anti-slavery, but that they did not " ' consent' to the 'words' of Christ and the 'doctrine' of 'godliness;' " that their teachings "led 'to envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds . . . ' " ²⁸ These are not the product of the advocacy of freedom, equal rights, or humanity, but rather are the products of slavery. Hartzel concluded that these teachers were actually "pro-slavery teachers." ²⁹

In the eleventh verse Hartzel noted that Timothy was the subject. He was advised to flee not only from these teachers, but from "both the men and the things." ³⁰

Hartzel proceeded, following this discussion, to contrast the position of the slaveholder and the abolitionist. The slaveholder was rich and interested in slavery for gain. Many sought to "gain" the favor of the rich, for they were popular, honorable, and powerful. For a slaveholder to "gain" by the slave system, he had also to hold that one man had the right to the labor of another, as well as to that of his wife and children, and to own them as he did his horses. Freedom would deny all this. That the abolitionists were motivated by "gain" could not be true, since they had "lost place, cast, and favor with those in power; have been mobbed, tarred and feathered, whipped, imprisoned, lynched, and murdered" ³¹ and this could hardly be called "gain."

²⁸ Ibid. ²⁹ Ibid., 235. ³⁰ Ibid., 236. ³¹ Ibid., 235.

Going back to the second verse, Hartzel said that those who had believing masters were in a new relationship with them; that of brothers when they were converted. This idea of a new relationship was central in Hartzel's thinking and solution to the problem. The duties and relationship were now changed and the term master no longer held the designation it did in Roman or American slavery. Hartzel concluded from the earlier argument over gain, that these false teachers must have been unbelieving masters who could only be despised by their slaves. "A brother can only esteem a brother if he acts a brother's part." ³²

The command for slaves not to despise the master, was a result of their relation as brothers in Christ with their masters. The duty, respect, and honor to be given were based on this new relationship, not on that of master and slave. He cited several verses to support his argument. ³³ In situations where believing slaves had unbelieving masters, the respect paid was not because of the relation of master and slave, but because of the relation of the believing slave and God. He showed this respect because of God's command.

Hartzel was not sure what Peter and Paul meant by the use of

³² Ibid. , 236.

³³ Hartzel cited Ephesians 6; Colossians 3; Titus 2:10; I Peter 2:18, 19. Ibid. , 237.

the terms, master and slave, but "when writing to Christians, they did not use them in their current political import." ³⁴ He was sure, however, that under the state the obligations involved were based directly on the relationship. The political use of the terms could not be reconciled to the Christian relationship. He noted that even though one were to grant that the apostles were pro-slavery, there was a change in the relation. First of all, the titles of master and slave were applied before conversion. Second, the relation still held at the time of conversion. Third, the change which took place was not instantaneous,

but a gradual work effected by the leavening process of the Gospel, as suggested to the parties by new and holy relations, new duties growing out of divine relations, and enforced by new motives . . . ³⁵

The second verse, Hartzel believed, taught nothing different from the instruction given to all Christians. Namely:

- 1st, That christian brethren should not despise one another.
- 2nd, That they should be faithful to one another.
- 3rd, That they should love one another.
- 4th, That they should be partakers in whatever benefit might result from capital invested or labor performed. This is Paul's instructions to christian masters and servants. ³⁶

If these were obeyed, he concluded, slavery must come to an end.

In the next to the last of this series of articles dealing with the Bible and slavery, Hartzel used the Bible to support his anti-slavery stand. Citing I Corinthians 7:21, he emphasized the statement Paul

³⁴ Ibid., 238. ³⁵ Ibid. ³⁶ Ibid., 239.

made that a servant should be free if he could be, "if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." ³⁷ This was as direct an abolitionist statement as could be made. If Paul had made this statement in Kentucky he would have been in danger. The slaveholders there, hearing these words, would be compelled to free those in their household who desired it. It appeared to Hartzel that this passage was calculated to make the slave members of the church more dissatisfied with their lot. ³⁸

Ephesians 6:9 was cited as the place where the masters were told to stop threatening, because God made no difference between servant and master. But, Hartzel asked, how could slaves be kept in subjection except through fear? If any man from the North had said these words to a slaveholder he would be classed as an abolitionist. Paul's statement in Colossians 4:1, where masters are told to give their servants what was "just and equal," reminding them of their master in heaven, was cited. Were this said by someone other than the Apostle, in the modern age, such a person would be considered an abolitionist. But such teachings were considered as inspired and the slaveholder must treat them as such. Hartzel held that as a slaveholder he would have to act according to these commands if he were a Christian. ³⁹

One argument the pro-slavery people could bring up was that the states would not allow freedom to slaves. Hartzel noted that "Paul

³⁷ Ibid. (April 1857), 298. ³⁸ Ibid., 301. ³⁹ Ibid.

. . .decided first of all that servants were entitled to freedom . . . ; if not freedom, then (to) what is 'just and equal.' " ⁴⁰ He felt that had there been justice and freedom from the beginning, slavery would not have existed.

Another matter which Hartzel thought should be brought out was that the Bible said nothing directly about the relation between the believing master and the non-believing slave. In this case he was of the opinion that since "God is no respecter of persons," it would seem reasonable to hold that God would require no less from them than He did from believing servants who had unbelieving masters. ⁴¹ He then suggested that the unbelieving slave should be "respected as men." "Make them feel and know that they are men; that they have souls to be saved, or lost. By your godly deportment, win them to the gospel of Christ." ⁴² But Hartzel did not think that a master could do this and still maintain the relationship of master and slave. "We are sure," he said, "that the slaveholder who acts the part of the slaveholder, can exercise no saving power over his slaves." ⁴³ The slaves would hold that if their master was a Christian and held them in bondage, then they would not want to be Christian.

Philemon represented the high point of the slavery argument found in the New Testament. Hartzel held that the assumption that

⁴⁰ Ibid. ⁴¹ Ibid., 302. ⁴² Ibid. ⁴³ Ibid.

Onesimus was a slave was "probably, but not certainly, so." ⁴⁴ He felt that the assumption that Onesimus ran away was not as clear as the slaveholders seemed to believe. He noted that Paul said that Onesimus "departed" and this could mean that he departed with Philemon's consent. The slaveholders' argument taken from this passage rested on much which was "hypothetical." ⁴⁵

It is hardly reconcilable with a high moral consciousness to seize upon a passage as indefinite as this, and make it subserve a cause so grave, so weighty as American Slavery. ⁴⁶

For the sake of argument, Hartzel assumed that Onesimus was a slave and a fugitive in Rome when Paul found him. But such an assumption would not help the pro-slavery argument, Hartzel thought. All it did was to point out that "slaves escaped from their masters in the first century, as they do in the nineteenth century." ⁴⁷ Had Onesimus's running away been a rare event the system would not come under criticism, but this was not the case. It was a common event. Then, asked Hartzel, why do we have fugitive slaves but hear nothing of "fugitive husbands, fugitive sons, fugitive daughters?" ⁴⁸ There were few fugitives from these relations, but many from the slave relation. It was necessary to have a Fugitive Slave Bill, but not a "Fugitive Wife Bill." The reason was that Onesimus, like other slaves, was "discontented and unhappy"

⁴⁴ Ibid. (April 1857), 303. ⁴⁵ Ibid. ⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. ⁴⁸ Ibid.

under the relationship. "He preferred to be a fugitive in a hostile world, rather than to be a slave at home." 49

Finding Onesimus, Paul converted him. When Paul made a suggestion that he return to Philemon, Onesimus volunteered to return. Paul pointed out to Philemon that Onesimus was not returning as a slave, but as a brother. Hartzel understood this to mean that if Philemon refused to accept Onesimus on these terms, Onesimus was not obligated to stay. Paul placed obligations on Philemon which would "neutralize the relation" which had existed between them before. 50

Hartzel believed that this letter from Paul was of untold value in the slavery-abolition conflict. It showed exactly what the relation of master and slave must be in the Christian context. It showed that these antagonistic ideas could not live together in a Christian relationship. 51 He believed that his letter showed that the relation of master and slave was dissolved by the Christian relation. And any "effort to harmonize the relation of master and slave with the relation of Christianity, is the rudest assault ever committed upon the gospel of peace." 52

The only thing which kept the master-slave relationship was desire for money. Money created and dissolved the relationship. This was a selfish arrangement on the part of the master since he received all the benefits. "In Jesus Christ, selfishness must yield to Christian

49 Ibid., 304. 50 Ibid., 304. 51 Ibid. 52 Ibid., 306.

sympathy" ⁵³ That Christianity and slavery were opposed to each other, Hartzel thought, was seen in the fact that,

Slavery is older than Christianity If slavery had been an approved element of society, its right of occupancy would not have been disputed by them (the Apostles). They would have taken it in as it was, and would have treated it with respect, as they did civil government, and other relations of society. They would have acknowledged the rightfulness of the relation, and would have enforced the current duties, as then established by the usages of society. They would have given permanence to the institution with a view to its continuance in the church. They would have made no concessions to slaves, or have enforced no duties upon masters. ⁵⁴

But this they did not do.

That the Apostles did make concession to slaves was seen in the statement: "Art thou called being a servant, care not for it, for if thou mayest be made free, use it rather," ⁵⁵ and in Paul's sending Onesimus back under conditions of freedom. Hartzel stressed the fact that Philemon may have lost Onesimus as a slave, but he received him back as a brother. ⁵⁶

Hartzel concluded this series of articles by again saying that money was the root of slavery. If the Christian principle were allowed to work unrestrained, it would carry slavery out of the church. "For we may safely say, there never was a Christian slaveholder that had not serious qualms of conscience" ⁵⁷ about the matter. If his conscience were not blunted by false philosophy, he would find that "his guilty conscience could be eased only "by the 'manumission of all his slaves, as

⁵³ Ibid., 307. ⁵⁴ Ibid. ⁵⁵ Ibid. ⁵⁶ Ibid., 308. ⁵⁷ Ibid., 309.

some good men both among the dead and the living have done.' " 58

In examining the Bible and in discussing it, Hartzel found that those passages which were often used by the pro-slavery people, were actually abolition arguments. The problem would be solved when the so-called Christian slaveholders recognized what was required of them by Jesus and the Apostles.

Hartzel's arguments were reasonable. He followed closely the exegetical method which Alexander Campbell made popular in Disciple circles.⁵⁹ He showed that abolitionists could argue their position from the traditional point of view. To Hartzel's credit, none of the Disciples who opposed his point of view attempted to refute his argument directly. Hartzel continued his attack on them by discussing the apologies for slavery.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The method used by Campbell was a literal, word-by-word analysis of the material. See above p. 32.

CHAPTER IX

JONAS HARTZEL: ANSWER TO SLAVERY APOLOGISTS

One of Hartzel's major writings on the subject of slavery appeared in the Magazine as a series called "Apologies for Slavery." In these articles he answered the defense for slavery presented by some of the Disciples. Here appeared not only Hartzel's abolitionist thinking, but also the arguments of both the pro-slavery and anti-abolition anti-slavery groups.

In his introductory remarks Hartzel set the contrast between the two basic views. "There are those who defend slavery. If honest in their defense, their judgement approves the system as being intrinsically right and good." ¹ On the other side "there are those who condemn slavery. If these are sincere in their opposition, they regard the system of human slavery as being inherently wrong and sinful."² Hartzel also recognized another group who "write apologies for slavery" which neither condemn nor justify the system. The views they expressed were dictated by policy. They attempted to keep a balance by saying an equal number of things on both sides of the issue. These people maintained

¹ Jonas Hartzel, "Apologies for Slavery," Magazine (June 1857), 369.

² Ibid., 369-370.

that slavery was not a religious institution and thus should be left to the politicians.³ In this group Hartzel placed Alexander Campbell.⁴

It was to these people that this series was addressed.

Hartzel criticized the middle of the road group because it shifted the slavery issue out of the area of religion. He quoted Campbell as having said that abolition of slavery was "the appropriate work of the political Franklins, Washingtons,Jeffersons, but not of Peter or Paul"⁵ This shift of the responsibility was "an 'excuse,' a 'fig leaf' covering, to hide . . . not from the shame of" defending American slavery, but from disgrace of "withholding a hand of help for the removal of" slavery, "the 'maximum of all evils.' " ⁶

In the article which Hartzel was answering in this series, a distinction had been made between Roman and American slavery. Hartzel asked why there should be a difference? He felt that once the relation had been sustained, then the slaveholder would have a "text" and could add his own details. To conceive, he argued that if any slavery were condoned by the Bible, then all slavery was condoned. Therefore, if the Bible admitted and supported slavery, there was no need for

³ Ibid. , 370. ⁴ Ibid. , 372.

⁵ Ibid. , 370. The article referred to was Alexander Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate," Harbinger (August 1854), 472-474.

⁶ Hartzel, op. cit. , 371.

apology for it. It was argued further, that if Christ allowed man to own man at any time in the past, he still allowed it, for he never changed his religion to suit time or place. Thus all "this talk about the apostles . . . 'admitting and sustaining the relation of master and servant for life,' and then denouncing the system as an evil thing," was like moving with the wind.⁷

Hartzel attacked Campbell's position that "the Church had nothing to do with slavery."⁸ Campbell had said:

1st. "It is the duty of the Christian ministry to convert the world, and edify the Church."

2nd. And negatively, "Not to reform the world, or its worldly institutions."

3rd. "This is the appropriate work of political Franklins,"etc.⁹

This set of statements, Hartzel contended, contained enough truth along with falsehood, to confuse the unsuspecting reader.

Hartzel admitted in discussing the first statement of Campbell's, that the edification of the church was the duty of the ministry, along with conversion of the heathen. But he did not feel that the ministry was doing this "when it baptizes the slaveholder and slavery."¹⁰ Slaveholders who were members of the churches were no different from the rest. They were no more prone to remove the evil, to educate, or to manumit. They continued on as other slaveholders in buying and selling, and breeding slaves for the market. This, Hartzel thought, did not build up the church

⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Ibid. ⁹ Ibid., 372. ¹⁰ Ibid.

in righteousness.¹¹

The second statement relieved the church from the responsibility of doing anything about "the sum of all villainies" and the "maximum of all evils," since it belonged to the class of "worldly institutions." Hartzel felt that the apologists for slavery shifted their position according to the questions which were raised. He noted that when slavery was made a moral issue, "then slavery is recognized by both 'Old and New Testaments,' " but when the church was asked to do something on behalf of the "man-chattel," slavery became a "worldly institution." He believed that the church was doing more to support this "worldly institution" than the world itself.¹² In fact, he said, "She has become its godfather."¹³

In discussing the "political Franklins" and their work on behalf of the slaves, he noted that the church stood in their way. When the "Franklins" united in attempting to do something about reforming that part of society, the church did not support their action. Some church members assisted, but some from the world also assisted. Thus there was no difference between the two. He reminded the reader that the church failed to support reform when the constitutions of Virginia and Kentucky were being revised. "But there was no difference between the

¹¹ Ibid. ¹² Ibid. ¹³ Ibid., 373.

church and the world, in these favorable opportunities to cast out" slavery.¹⁴

Hartzel closed the first article with five reasons why he felt that the church was wholly responsible for American slavery. (1) The church had attempted to prevent discussion of the subject. Those few ministers who had attempted to instruct others on this matter were denounced as agitators, "causing division by preaching politics from the pulpit." ¹⁵

(2) The church "ignored the wrongs of the slave."¹⁶ The church had made no protest against laws which prevented the slave from reading about his Saviour. The church could have become a party against the world had she opposed these laws. But the church failed, and now the slaveholder could plead inability to free his slaves because of the oppression of the laws. The church could get redress from the laws if she so desired, but she did not desire to do so. "Until the church will make an effort to remove the hinderances to emancipation . . . we must regard her excuses as false and hypocritical." ¹⁷

(3) The church failed to use her control of education to influence the young for the removal of this "sum of all villainies." Through this channel alone, Hartzel believed, the institution could have been eliminated.

¹⁴ Ibid., 374. ¹⁵ Ibid. ¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ Ibid., 375.

But the schools were seeking to appease the slave power and thus turn this source of influence in a pro-slavery direction.¹⁸ For this action God would hold the church "accountable in the day of reckoning."¹⁹

(4) As in education, so it was with the press where the church held the greatest influence. But as in education the church did not employ this influence for the improvement of the slave. Hartzel pointed out that the Disciple journals, excepting the Magazine, were not open to the discussion of this question. In fact, they were either defending slavery or offering apologies for it, or refusing to say anything at all on the matter.²⁰

(5) The most powerful tool of all in the hands of the church, the pulpit, was not being used to speak against this moral evil. The reason for this failure to speak was fear of dividing the denomination, and this party interest was stronger than the religious interest. The churches were afraid of curbing the support of tract and missionary societies, and other like institutions. In order to save these they made speaking on slavery a matter of forbearance.

Because "the church has failed to do what she should have done and might have done,"²¹ she had strengthened the cords and stakes of

¹⁸ For further discussion of this argument see the discussion of the conflict between Bethany College and North-Western Christian University, below, Chapter XIII.

¹⁹ Hartzel, op. cit. ²⁰ Ibid., 375-376. ²¹ Ibid., 377.

slavery. "She could have created a public sentiment . . . that would have removed slavery by . . . brotherly co-operation; upon some plan of compensation . . ."22

In the second of this series of articles, Hartzel discussed those who held that slavery was wrong, and needed to be reformed. These people believed that after certain corrections were made, slavery would be changed from an evil to a good. He listed and discussed five areas where these people thought reform could be instituted which would change the complexion of slavery. (1) That the slave trade should be abandoned. (2) The marriage rights of the slaves should be observed and respected just as was the case with any Christian marriage. (3) The paternal relations of the slaves should also be respected. (4) The education of slaves by their owners should be required. (5) The treatment of slaves should be generally improved. 23

The use of the word "abuse" indicated to Hartzel that the object being abused had utility. The more utility, the more would be the abuse. There needed to be something of value or good involved in an object before it could be abused. Thus, gambling could not be abused itself, but it could be used as a means of abusing men. Counterfeit money could not be abused, but it could abuse the one who received it. Abuse was "the

22 Ibid. 23 Ibid. (July 1857), 17.

means of gratifying the most brutal lust--the occasion of theft, robbery, and murder."²⁴ Hartzel felt that it was necessary to distinguish "between that which can be 'abused', and that which cannot be 'abused'."²⁵ Only those things which "propose a mutual good" could be abused, and they were abused when they were perverted so that the mutual good was not passed on to all, or when some or all parties were defrauded. Slavery was an abuse since all the advantages were diverted to one person, the owner. Therefore any reform of the system would have to cause the advantages to be shared equally by master and slave. This, however, was impossible for it would eliminate the system. "To talk of the 'abuses' of slavery, is like talking about the 'abuse' of systematic robbery or counterfeiting." ²⁶ One cannot reform a vice into a virtue.

With this as his introduction, Hartzel proposed to show, by answering the proposed reforms given above, that slavery was "a wicked conspiracy against the enslaved for the benefit of the enslaver," ²⁷ and that such an institution could not be reformed.

In response to the idea that the slave trade should be stopped and that such action would aid in reforming the system, he pointed out that this was not an abuse of the system. It was not an abuse because slaves were merchandise. The selling of children and women, as well as men, was no more an abuse than selling any property. Even though

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵ Ibid. ²⁶ Ibid., 18. ²⁷ Ibid.

the system itself would not allow for this kind of reform, Hartzel was happy to hear that the apologists favored stopping the slave trade. He did wish that they would distinguish between the abuse of a system and a system which abused.²⁸

The desire of the reformer to protect the rights of the slave family and marriage was commended by Hartzel, who thought "that the heart of the apologist is better than his head is wise."²⁹ The wrong was a part of the system and could not be corrected within the system. The interesting suggestion was made that if married slaves were sold within visiting distance, then this might be an inducement to marriage and morality; but such an arrangement would reduce the profit of the master and this loss could not be tolerated. Marriage of slaves was a "farce." Honoring such an arrangement would stop "another kind of sexual traffic," which had had the effect of "bleaching" and was the result of the lust of the master. Under the system, this failure to recognize slave marriage was not an abuse, although "national chastity" demanded it be corrected.³⁰

Hartzel gave considerable space to the relationship of parents and children. He agreed that the relationship of the family should be guarded, but that slave parents had a right to this duty was denied under the slave system. Exclusive right of the parents to the child would be

²⁸ Ibid. ²⁹ Ibid. ³⁰ Ibid., 19.

counter to the system, which allowed the child to be sold even before birth. The only difference between the relationship of a slave mother and her child, and a cow and a calf, or a sheep and a lamb, was that she was a human being. But she was still considered in her person as a brute.³¹ Slavery was against the natural instincts of mother and child relationships because the slave mother did not know when her child would be taken from her and sold. This obliterated the divine image and was worse than the whip and branding iron. But American Christians were parties to this; some would excuse it, some did not care. The slave system held that the natural affections must be extinguished.³²

Hartzel thought the slaveholders were defying God because God said that the parents shall "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The slaveholders told "God to the face that their slaves shall not do this."³³ This the masters do because of the profit they receive in human flesh. This abuse could be corrected only by abolition of the system.³⁴

As to the matter of educating the slave, Hartzel agreed that this seemed reasonable, but it was not just. To require a slaveholder to educate his slave would cost him money and would not bring him any advantage. It would cause the slave to be unhappy in his condition and thus unfit for slavery. That Christians were inconsistent in their

³¹ Ibid. ³² Ibid., 19-20. ³³ Ibid., 20. ³⁴ Ibid., 21.

feelings was indicated by the fact that the savages in Africa were their brethren and it was their duty to bring them to equality by education. Missionaries were being sent for this purpose, but the same race in America could not be educated and had to be kept as beasts.³⁵

Hartzel discussed at length the apologists' suggestion that the treatment of the slaves be improved. In starting his discussion he indicated that the Negro was legally forbidden from caring for himself or supplying his own wants. This legal restriction had come to mean in the minds of many, that the Negro was incompetent to care for himself and this incompetence was natural with Negroes. This in turn led to the conclusion that "God made the Negroes to be slaves."³⁶ It was around this conclusion that Hartzel centered his discussion of this suggestion.

If this conclusion were correct, the Negro was the exception to natural law, which said that what is characteristic of a species is common to the whole species. Thus if Negroes were human, they had the natural capacities of all of the species. It was evident that Negroes had provided for themselves in their native land. The colonizationists boasted about this and pointed to Liberia as an example of Negro ability. If Negroes were incapable, the colonization society was a lie and a cheat. Hartzel pointed out also that Negroes provided for themselves and even

³⁵ Ibid., 22. ³⁶ Ibid. (October 1857), 101.

accumulated wealth in the free states. Another point he made was that many slaves had redeemed themselves by working a plot of land given them for their own use by their master. His last argument against this idea was the slaves not only provided for themselves, but for their masters also. They had created nearly all the wealth in the South. From these premises, Hartzel concluded that the Negroes were not dependent.³⁷

If God had created Negroes as slaves, then both Moses and Paul had sustained the relationship. And if this be true God was "the most partial and cruel of all the Gods."³⁸ Such a God was not the God Hartzel worshiped. His God did not sustain the relationship, and had stepped in and broken "the rod of the oppressor" when the Hebrews were enslaved in Egypt. God had not created the Negroes for slavery.

Although this reform in the treatment of American slaves was a reasonable reform, such a change was not to be expected. It would be necessary for the slave owner to recognize the slaves as human, and the doctrines "of the Bible with reference to the common origin of the human family," would have to be admitted.³⁹ Once this were done, the moral rights of the master and slave would become equal and American slavery would be a wicked outrage.

In the last article to appear under the title, "Apologies for

³⁷ Ibid., 102. ³⁸ Ibid. ³⁹ Ibid., 102-103.

Slavery," Hartzel considered as an apology for slavery the view "that Slavery, being established by law in this country, we therefore should be quiet and offer it no resistance," ⁴⁰ as this would stop the strife. Hartzel pointed out that the civil power's enactment of a law does not make the law right or just. This was true even though one could cite Romans 13:1-2, as the apologists did:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers--for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and . . . shall receive . . . damnation.

This passage did not demand unlimited obedience to the civil magistrates. If it did, the American Revolution was a sin. The theologians, however, supported the Revolution in face of this passage, and had held it the duty of the people to resist oppression and unrighteous laws. If the Revolution was right, then the resistance to unrighteous slave laws was also right. The abolitionists were not resisting the powers of God, but the powers of Satan. ⁴¹

Hartzel reflected the higher law doctrine, popular among the abolitionists, when he pointed out that although one was required to obey the magistrates, one was also "subject to the higher powers" which had requirements to be met also. To support his views he cited the commandment to love the neighbour, and noted Romans 13:10: "Love worketh

⁴⁰ Ibid. (January 1858), 209 ⁴¹ Ibid., 210-211.

no ill to his neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." He did not feel that one was required to follow a magistrate when ordered to do an evil work. Thus men were absolved of any violation of the law when they refused to do the evil work of slave catching. When the civil power conflicted with the Divine laws, Divine laws were to be rendered "all their dues." The civil "office only is of divine appointment, but the exercise of that office had no divine sanction. . . ." ⁴² He used David as an example of a ruler who did evil and who was punished for it.

. . . Paul, Peter, and all who died for the name of Jesus, did not believe the doctrine of unlimited subjection to the powers that be, and yet they all taught that civil government existed by the will of God. ⁴³

All this indicated that there was a higher law, but the problem was that few seemed to know when one law ended and the other began. Sir William Blackstone, Hartzel thought, supported the higher law view. Blackstone was cited as saying that man is subject to the will of his creator, and that "no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this." ⁴⁴ From this and similar extracts from Blackstone, Hartzel concluded that the lawyers supported the higher law ⁴⁵ and contradicted the theological

⁴² Ibid., 212.

⁴³ Ibid., 213.

⁴⁴ Ibid. See Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England (Philadelphia: Rees, Welsh, 1902), I, 28-33.

⁴⁵ The "higher Law" doctrine was made popular among the abolitionists through William H. Seward's speech delivered in Congress on March 11, 1850; see Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1947), I, 298.

apologists for slavery. Since life and liberty were given to man by the Divine will, they were not subject to the civil law, and civil law which deprived man of these was in violation of God's law.⁴⁶

With this evidence from Blackstone and other legal writers and interpreters, Hartzel thought the next step was to determine if the apologists for American slavery considered Negroes as men. If they did, it was necessary that they consider laws which took from the Negroes their divine right to life and liberty as laws against the will of God. If the Negroes had forfeited their right to these by crime, the situation would be different. But Hartzel did not think they had, since they had not been tried and condemned. Hartzel told the apologists that they were asking him to submit to the law and not to resist it. Such a request rested on the assumption that the civil law should be obeyed regardless of its conflicts with Divine law. Such an assumption Hartzel thought he had proven false.

Hartzel concluded that if the "apology for American slavery is valid, it will excuse polygamy in Utah, all that is hateful to God, and ruinous to man." ⁴⁷

The next point of the apologists which Hartzel discussed was that "some slaveholders are good men." He raised at once the question:

⁴⁶Hartzel, op. cit., 214. ⁴⁷ Ibid., 216.

Was it slavery which made them good men? If this were the case then they were bad men before they became slaveholders. And if this be true, the institution was half good, and if the slave was bad before becoming a slave and good afterward, then the institution was good completely. Thus this "tree" should bring forth "good fruit." However, in the past there had been other good men who were not good because of the system they followed, but in spite of it. It was not pagan idolatry which made Aristides or Socrates good men, nor was it atheism which made Robert Owen a good man. The same was true of the slaveholders. They were not good men because they were slaveholders, but in spite of it.⁴⁸

Hartzel remained of the opinion that "no good man . . . will stand in a relation that is 'essentially dogmatical, absolute and lordly,' " while keeping "others in a condition where they must be 'cringing, abject, and servile.' " ⁴⁹

To support his opinion, Hartzel quoted a long passage from Alexander Campbell's Christian Baptist, in which Campbell had said that "whatever belonged to all men naturally must equally belong to all." To withhold from men "what belongs to them, is a sin."⁵⁰ From this Hartzel concluded,

⁴⁸ Ibid. (April 1858), 289. ⁴⁹ Ibid. , 290. ⁵⁰ Ibid. , 291-292.

that the "good slaveholder" is a rude, remorseless invader of other men's rights; that he is both a thief and a robber, in the most aggravated sense of these terms. ⁵¹

The division of slaveholders into classes of good and bad did not alter the case. The "good" man was one who had a superior knowledge of things in general and was more responsible to God. "The more . . . goodness a man possesses, the clearer will be his perception of things right and wrong." ⁵² Thus the good slaveholder would see more clearly the natural right of man and the error of his ways. As an example of a good slaveholder, Hartzel quoted from the will of John Randolph of Roanoke, in which he freed his slaves because of his conscience which told him "they are justly entitled to their freedom." ⁵³ To be a good slaveholder, "is to emancipate his slaves." ⁵⁴

To hold that "some slaveholders are good men," was to make an evil communication." ⁵⁵

It corrupts good manners. It makes sad havoc with good morals. To make one man believe that another man may voluntarily become a slaveholder-- continue a slaveholder-- die a slaveholder--be a good man--a good Christian-- is only to convince him that goodness and Christianity are not rigid in their demands. ⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., 292. ⁵² Ibid., 293.

⁵³ Ibid. For a discussion of Randolph's will and the reception of his slaves in Ohio, see Henry Noble Sherwood, "The Settlement of the John Randolph Slaves in Ohio," Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, V(1911-1912), 39-59.

⁵⁴ Hartzel, op. cit. ⁵⁵ Ibid., 296-297. ⁵⁶ Ibid., 297.

In his closing article on the apologists for slavery, Hartzel raised the question of what the apologists were really attempting to do through their efforts. He saw two goals in their minds. The first was "to sooth and pacify that exasperated moral sentiment . . . which, if not checked, will . . . operate powerfully and efficiently" for abolition through the churches. The second was "as a means to an end, to prevent all discussion of the subject."⁵⁷ Free discussion of the issue would result only in its coming to an end. In the South to discuss the issue was to endanger the peace of the church. Hartzel then asked who among the Disciple editors in the past fifteen years had discussed the merits of the question? He pointed out that Disciples had not been backward in creating theological controversy, and had written freely and openly on most errors. He asked: "Why be so cautious upon this subject?" He answered the question, saying that he understood their silence. It was a passive grace which "is the favor that all ask who know themselves to be vulnerable, and are unwilling to abandon a false position."⁵⁸

Hartzel brought up the question which some of the apologists asked: "Why don't you abolitionists show us how to get rid of it?" He answered by saying that all concerned must be satisfied on what was to be done. Once this was established the means for bringing about what needed to be done would take care of itself.⁵⁹ This question by the

⁵⁷ Ibid. (May 1858), 333. ⁵⁸ Ibid. ⁵⁹ Ibid. , 333-334.

apologists implied that all slaveholders knew that slavery was wrong. This, however, was not as true as the apologists thought.

In dealing more specifically with the question of getting rid of slavery, Hartzel pointed out several problems which stood in the way. One was that once a slaveholder admitted that he was wrong, but did not manumit his slaves, he was under the control of some power which held him back. To bring up the matter of freeing slaves without personal injustice or injury to the slaves was to salve the conscience into doing nothing.⁶⁰ The church also stood in the way. He quoted John Wesley as saying that "Slavery is the sum of all villainies."⁶¹ But Hartzel went on to point out that although Wesley thought it was the sum of all villainies, he permitted it in his church and among his members and ministers. His condemnation was of the system, and not of the personal actions of individual slaveholders. Alexander Campbell was cited as saying that he would never defend slavery as long as the Bible lived, because it was the "maximum of all evils"⁶² but he also said that the Christian minister had as his duty the edification of the church and the conversion of the world, not the reformation of the world or its institutions.⁶³ What kept this "sum of all villainies" and "maximum of all evils" abroad

⁶⁰ Ibid., 335-336. ⁶¹ Ibid., 336.

⁶² Ibid.; Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate," op. cit., 473.

⁶³ Hartzel, op. cit.

in the land? Those who support it, the slaveholders.

The first step necessary for the removal of slavery was the unifying of the American people on the premise that slavery was an evil and a dishonor to God. Once this were done, redress would be at hand. Hartzel thought that for a Christian slaveholder to ask for compensation or to have the state buy his slaves was "inconsistent and dishonorable to the Christian profession."⁶⁴ It would bring his salvation into question. Actually no plan was necessary to undo this evil. God's method in dealing with evil was uniform and applied here: "Let the wicked forsake their ways."⁶⁵ This command was all the plan needed.

Hartzel indicated in these writings that the apologists for slavery were hypocrites and sinners, that slavery came from violence and hatred, and could be eliminated when the Divine rights of the slave were recognized. The apologists needed to determine whether the institution was Biblical or worldly. They could not shift it from one to the other as occasion demanded.

He saw the church as being responsible for slavery because it did not support those in favor of its elimination. The church also refused to use its schools, its press, and its pulpit to point out the evil of the system. The demand for silence because the system was legal by civil law, denied the higher law of God. All the arguments of the apologists

⁶⁴ Ibid., 338. ⁶⁵ Ibid.

were of no effect because the system itself was evil. The only correction was immediate emancipation, without compensation, and the church should support such a course.

Hartzel indicated in his discussion that the only Disciple publication supporting the abolitionist cause was the Magazine. Its editor, John Boggs, was another one of the few Disciples who wrote extensively on the subject.

CHAPTER X

JOHN BOGGS: DISCIPLE ABOLITIONIST EDITOR

Although many Disciple historians thought there was little controversy among the brotherhood over slavery, most of them have said little about John Boggs, who edited The North-Western Christian Magazine and The Christian Luminary.¹ Although the Magazine started with less than a hundred subscribers in 1854,² it claimed to be the third largest circulating Disciple publication by 1857.³ The Christian Luminary was a continuation of the Magazine with a different size and format. These two publications constituted the voice of Disciple abolition.

Not everyone was happy with the prospect of a new magazine, much less one which was going to discuss the slavery question, although slavery was not to be the only item of discussion.⁴ The other items of

¹ For example, Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 332, which is the standard history of the movement at the present time, mentions Boggs once as the editor of the Magazine. He is not listed in the index.

² John Boggs, "Essays and Addresses of John Boggs", Type-script in The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Library, Nashville, 10.

³ John Boggs, "Introduction," Magazine (July 1857), 2.

⁴ Boggs, "Essays and Addresses," 11.

importance discussed in the Magazine were: "(1) The advocacy of Primitive Christianity; (2) Of General Education; (3) Of the temperance Reform."⁵

Alexander Campbell gave notice of the new publication in the Harbinger, for which Boggs had one time been agent. Campbell, however, was not at all happy with the title Boggs selected for his publication, nor with his plan to discuss slavery. Campbell considered the addition of the words "North-Western" to "Christian Magazine" as indicating a sectional tone and purpose.⁶ Campbell asserted that he did "not know by what special election he (Boggs) signalizes and addresses North-Western Christians, unless he writes for the special latitude . . ."⁷

Early criticism of the Magazine was not limited to Campbell. John R. Howard, editor of the Christian Banner, a Kentucky Disciple publication, also offered criticism of the new periodical, which Boggs answered in the second number of the Magazine. In his article in the Banner, Howard reprinted the purpose of the Magazine, saying that he did not object to the first three items proposed;⁸ however, he seriously

⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶ Alexander Campbell, "North-Western Christian Magazine," Harbinger (August 1854), 474.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John Boggs, "What They Say of Us in Kentucky," Magazine (August 1854), 51.

objected to a discussion of slavery. He feared the discussion of this question would lead to alienation, discord, and strife; and finally end "in separation and DISUNION!" ⁹

Boggs was warned about the course he was taking.

We would not, for any consideration upon earth, be in brother Boggs' situation, if he shall attempt to make this a question, and an issue, as he seems determined upon here-- or be amenable to the great bar of Christ, for the disastrous consequences that must most inevitably result from this discussion! Let him pause well, and "count the cost," before he enters upon it. If its discussion in his paper, and what it may give rise to elsewhere should cause separation and disunion among us, what must and will be his feelings!'. What says the word of inspiration "Mark them who cause divisions ----." ¹⁰

Howard considered the discussion of slavery as a political matter, "one with which the Christian Religion has nothing to do," ¹¹ and to make it a religious question was to pervert Christianity. This was true because the New Testament had nothing to say "upon the right or wrong, the guilt or innocence [,] of slavery; and for the evident reason, that it is a political, and not a religious institution." ¹²

In his comment on this article by Howard, Boggs stated that he was happy that in at least three areas Howard found "concurrence." Boggs hoped that after Howard got over his first alarm, he would concur in the fourth. The object, Boggs assured Howard, was not to cause division, but "to call the attention of our slaveholding brethren to the

⁹ Ibid., 52. ¹⁰ Ibid. ¹¹ Ibid. ¹² Ibid., 53.

subject; show them its sinfulness, and we have faith enough in their piety to believe they will renounce it."¹³ While the slaveholders held that the breaking up of families, overworking, poor food and clothing, and lack of education given the slaves were abuses of the system, Boggs asserted that they were "the legitimate results of it." On the other hand, Howard was told that the abuse of the system was "found in the kind treatment" of the slaves.¹⁴

In response to Howard's view that slavery was a political issue and that the rightness or wrongness of the matter rested in that area, so far as Boggs believed all question of right and wrong were to be settled by the Bible. Boggs could not see how the Disciples, who had long declared they were "governed by the Bible, and the Bible alone," and who had denounced human creeds, could at this point declare that slavery depended on political action for its rightness or wrongness.¹⁵ Carrying this line of reasoning further, Boggs pointed out that in some states gambling and liquor were legal, making them civil matters, and the church had no right to speak against these vices, since they were not religious. If Howard were consistent he would go to the political leaders to determine if these were right or wrong. In such matters the Christian must appeal to the Bible, which Boggs called, "the 'higher law.' "¹⁶

In answer to Howard's charge that he was causing division and

¹³ Ibid., 54. ¹⁴ Ibid. ¹⁵ Ibid., 55. ¹⁶ Ibid.

should be marked for it, Boggs held that this was a misuse of the text. Paul was not referring to those opposed to slavery, but to the Jewish teachers who were attempting to separate the people for their own gain. To apply this text against the abolitionists, was to take license with the text, a method of exegesis "which we as a people have always repudiated." ¹⁷

Bringing the matter of division closer home, Boggs asked what had caused more division than the Disciples' doctrine of baptism for the remission of sin. "How many Baptist churches has it divided? How many has it entirely broken up? . . . The same is true of the missionary cause." ¹⁸ Howard was asked if he were going to apply this quotation about division to himself and others who preached the doctrine of baptismal remission of sin.

Boggs did not think that all the Disciples would come over to his view at once. However, if all the editors and preachers would stress the law of love, it would be a step in that direction.

Howard wrote directly to Boggs sometime in the fall or winter of 1854-55, listing his reasons for objecting to the slavery discussion in more detail. He said that he was pleased with the prospectus of the Magazine, with the exception of the section on slavery, which he thought ought to be omitted. He gave Boggs seven reasons for his attitude on

¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸ Ibid.

this matter.

First, he believed that such a discussion was "calculated to estrange" the brethren from each other, and "to produce unchristian feelings . . . (and) to divide the churches." ¹⁹ Such discussion had already divided the Methodist church and was about to divide others. He pointed again to the text where those who caused division were to be marked.

Second, since such discussion would have to be limited to the free states, it could not possibly change conditions in the South where slavery existed, and thus was a useless discussion. The only results possible would be to "encourage enmity to the South, and exasperate and inflame the North . . ." ²⁰

Third, slavery was a political and not a religious institution. It was neither approved nor condemned in the New Testament. Duties between master and servants were laid down in the scripture. Rightness or wrongness of the institution could not be established by appeal to the Bible. ²¹

Fourth, since the matter was a political issue, it could be eliminated only by the government, and the constitution and laws would

¹⁹ John R. Howard, "Discussion of the Slavery Question, " Magazine (February 1855), 246.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

not permit this. It was up to the states to eliminate slavery. The church had no power to deal with it.²²

Fifth, Howard told Boggs that he was opposed to slavery, but was not an abolitionist. He was also opposed to abolition of slavery where it existed if it meant "turning the colored population loose" among the whites. He thought such action would be detrimental to both races and would make conditions worse than they were. The Negroes, he felt, would be looked down on by the whites and there would never be amalgamation of the races.²³

Sixth, the Negroes, at least at that time, were incapable of governing themselves. He thought that as a race Negroes were void of intelligence. Such a condition would cause them to continue as slaves. They would be free in name only. Howard pointed out that in the free states the Negroes were not permitted full equality with the whites. The "black laws" of Indiana and Ohio indicated that the Negroes' residence with whites was "incompatible." White men living in the same country with free Negroes considered them a "nuisance."²⁴

Seventh, Howard, as in the case of many other Disciples in Kentucky, favored colonization and gradual abolition. If slavery were to be abolished by law, then the slave owner should be compensated for his property. The freed Negroes would have to be removed. The state

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

would have to start such action and prepare the people for it. If the abolitionists would go at their work in the right manner, they would purchase slaves and send them to Liberia.²⁵

In his reply to these seven reasons for opposing the discussion of slavery, Boggs answered each one at length. He acknowledged that Howard showed moderation in his objections and that he had approached the subject in a "Christian spirit."

In response to the first objection, that it would cause division, Boggs answered by citing Alexander Campbell to show that the text was out of context. He noted that Elijah, Daniel and others of the Bible caused divisions. He pointed out that "there can be no reformation without change and as all who preach reformation, preach change, the consequence must be, that those who will not change,"²⁶ will charge the others with causing division.

In answer to the assertion that the discussion would be limited only to the free states, Boggs told Howard that the circulation of the Magazine was not limited to the free states alone. He had subscribers in four of the slave states. He felt there was a strong anti-slavery sentiment among many of the Disciples in the South. Besides this, the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ John Boggs, "Reply," Magazine (February 1855), 248.

Disciples had had much to say about Romanism and their discussions rarely were read by the Catholics. Also, even in the North, such a discussion would help put down the pro-slavery sentiment found there. Many felt that the sin of slave selling was trivial.²⁷

Boggs agreed with Howard that the Bible did not "approve or sanction American slavery," but he disagreed that it did not condemn slavery. He cited the "golden rule" and asked Howard if he believed that slaveholders "desire to be subjected to the degrading and servile conditions of his slaves?"²⁸ He pointed out that Christ commanded that he "search the scriptures," but American slavery did not permit this since teaching slaves to read was forbidden. The Bible also commanded that man and wife were not to be "put asunder" by man, but American slavery did this daily and this was not because of the abuse of the system, but because of the system itself.²⁹

Since the fourth objection did not touch the "religious point of view," Boggs moved on to the fifth. He did not think that anyone in the nineteenth century believed that intermarriage was necessary. Boggs believed that emancipation would actually decrease amalgamation. Under the slave system amalgamation was unlimited and uncontrolled.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., 249. Boggs cited the case of J. I. Rogers, who sold a slave to get rid of him. This reference led to a controversy; see below, pp. 211-221.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 249-250.

³⁰ Ibid., 250.

It was obvious that the slave could not govern himself at that time, but Howard's implication that he never would be able to do so was not necessarily valid. Boggs thought that it would be necessary to educate the slaves and give them aid until they could stand alone. He felt that the laws reflected the feelings of the people and the black codes indicated that the "political and social actions of men" could not be separated "from the moral and religious obligations" of the law of love in the New Testament.³¹ The black codes also reflected the necessity for discussion of the issue.

So far as colonization was concerned, Boggs thought that this offered no solution. Its purpose was to quiet the non-slaveholder in the North, and to rid the South of a free colored population. He did not think that it could ever rid the nation of slavery since it was the "creature" of slaveholders.³²

Editors of Disciple publications were not the only ones to take alarm at the slavery discussion in the Magazine. In a meeting of the North Mississippi Co-operation³³ the group condemned Boggs and the

³¹ Ibid., 250-251. ³² Ibid., 251.

³³ The meaning and use of the term "co-operation" is discussed to some extent in Russell Eugene Palmer, "An Analysis of Co-operation Evangelism as recorded in the Christian Record (1843-1894)" (Unpublished B. D. Thesis, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, 1948), p. ii. It appears to be the same as an association among the Baptists.

Magazine, passing four resolutions expressing their objection, and also commending Howard's stand.

The first resolution gave notice of Boggs' intent to publish the Magazine and that the fourth proposition for discussion in the publication was "Universal Liberty" and opposition to slavery. Since, in the opinion of the group, such an issue would open a "flood-tide of angry discord, both in the church and State," and since it had no place in a religious magazine, and since ministers were "inadequate . . . to such discussion;" they "Resolved, that this body enter their disapprobation to the discussion of the question of slavery through our religious Periodicals . . ." 34

In a second resolution they offered their "deepest sympathies" to Alexander Campbell because of his suffering and persecution resulting from his consistent views on the slavery issue. A third resolution praised John R. Howard and his Christian Banner, while the fourth recommended it to the members. 35

These resolutions were published in the Christian Banner, and Boggs republished them, for he saw them "as one of the greatest literary and ecclesiastic curiosities in the nineteenth century," and he wished "to append a few strictures." 36

³⁴ John Boggs, "Another Manifestation," Magazine (October 1854), 118-119.

³⁵ Ibid., 119.

³⁶ Ibid.

Boggs' impression was that the resolutions themselves indicated the "aggressive" spirit of American slavery. He noted that they did not wait to see the first copy of the Magazine before condemning it. He criticized them for meeting as a group to support home missions, and for assuming "the prerogative to dictate, not only to the editor of this Magazine (sic), but to all ' our religious periodicals, ' " ³⁷ what they should discuss. He noted also that "these self-constituted censors" made no attempt to justify slavery.

Boggs objected to the inference that slavery was only a political matter. He did not believe that the church should tell the state what to do, but Christians were obligated to tell other Christians what the Divine law was and to urge their compliance. He did not think it was "difficult to show that a system which prohibits the reading of the Bible, destroys . . . the family relation, encourages concubinage and adultery. . . ." ³⁸ was unChristian. Slavery was such a system.

He commended their resolution concerning Campbell, and then urged that they follow Campbell's action toward his slaves. This would soon end slavery, since Campbell was "a practical emancipationist." ³⁹

Although many criticized Boggs in the pages of other periodicals, some thought his course of action right. In the first issue of the second

³⁷ Ibid. ³⁸ Ibid., 120. ³⁹ Ibid., 121.

volume of the Magazine, Boggs printed excerpts from several letters commending his paper.⁴⁰

One of these writers was Harvey W. Everest, who had been expelled from Bethany College because of his anti-slavery activities.⁴¹ Everest was pleased that Boggs had "boldly drawn the sword of the spirit to make war against all kinds of slavery."⁴² Everest seconded Boggs' view on the sinfulness of slavery. He agreed that the abuse of slavery was necessarily a part of the system, and as the branches of a tree were sustained by the trunk, so the abuses of slavery were sustained by the system. Everest did not believe that slaveholders should be allowed in the churches. If necessary, they should be driven out "through a scourge of small cords."⁴³ Slaveholders had really not repented, since repentance meant renunciation of all sins, and as long as they were involved in the sin of slavery, they should not be admitted into the churches.

In a later article, Everest detailed his argument. He made the statement that almost all were agreed "that the abuse of slavery is a sin."

⁴⁰ John Boggs, "Words of Encouragement," Magazine (July 1855), 30-31.

⁴¹ See below, p. 178.

⁴² (Harvey W. Everest) to John Boggs, Rome, Ashtabula County, Ohio, June 26th, 1855, in Magazine (August 1855), 53.

⁴³ Ibid.

He thought that once it was admitted that slavery was itself an abuse, the controversy would end. Most of society became emotional over the word "abolitionist," and since the Disciples North and South were members of this class the subject was avoided and editors and preachers were silent. If slaveholding were right, it ought to be defended, if wrong it ought to be condemned. He challenged anyone to show that it was necessarily right.⁴⁴

Everest thought that Christians should not engage in a business which they could not ask God's aid. He wanted to know who could pray the prayer which would be required of a slaveholder.

Oh Lord, help, I am going to buy or steal a man. Oh thou giver of liberty to all men, help me to get and keep many slaves. Oh thou Omniscient One, thou knowest that 'my boy Henry' desires to run away; do thou give me christian fortitude to subdue his unholy desires with the rod, or do thou comfort his mourning family when I shall send him south. And do thou help thy servant to dedicate all his power and means to thy righteous cause. Amen.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ (Harvey W. Everest), "Voices from a Slave State," Magazine (November 1855), 142-144.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Boggs was supported in his activities by at least one Wesleyan Methodist minister. John P. Betker of Westmiddleton, Washington County, Pennsylvania, wrote Boggs in the summer of 1855, indicating that he was in full agreement with his position. He cautioned Boggs that his position should be communicated with care or the enemies of abolition would use the arguments for their own ends. This had been done when abolitionists had held that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document. (W. L. Garrison had done this; see Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 174). It had been done again when abolitionists had admitted that God authorized slavery in the time of Moses and that Onesimus was a runaway slave. See John P. Betker, "The Bible and Slavery," Magazine (July 1855), 10-12.

In November, 1855, Boggs ran excerpts from several letters he had received from various people supporting him. Walter Bartlett of Green, Trumbull County, Ohio, was surprised to learn that the Magazine was not strongly supported. One writer from Kentucky, whose name was withheld, sent Boggs money to cover ten subscriptions, although only four subscribers were then taking the Magazine, but he hoped to find people for the other six. The writer told Boggs that he need not look to the South for much support "until the people get right." "W.V.C." wrote from Bainbridge, Ohio, that many there were in sympathy with him and prayed for him and his work. G. B. Mullis wrote from Huntington, Indiana, that Boggs should not become discouraged, for he was fighting on the side of right.⁴⁶

Boggs' efforts had converted at least one person by 1857. A. C. Ford wrote Boggs that he changed his views on the slavery subject after having read the Magazine. He had cast aside the first issue because he was following Alexander Campbell's point of view. However, he happened to read "Bible Vindicated" in one issue and then examined the Bible for himself. He found that the abolition view was right. He assured Boggs that he was going to get all the subscribers he could for the Magazine.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ "Spirit of Our Correspondents," Magazine (November 1855), 151-153.

⁴⁷ A. C. Ford to John Boggs, Etna, O(hio), January 6, 1857, in Magazine (February 1857), 249-251.

J. B. Allen reported that he and Jonas Hartzel had been to Long Grove, Iowa, where Hartzel preached on the sin of slavery. At this meeting a hundred dollars was collected for the support of the Magazine. Allen felt that there were many who could contribute this much themselves, and urged them to do so. ⁴⁸

In discussing the origins of the Magazine, Boggs stated that the prospectus was sent to those he knew personally, or indirectly who would favor the enterprise. The reaction to the idea was not what one would call encouraging, but there were some who thought the idea a good one. ⁴⁹ Many did not think the Magazine would last six months, and Boggs asserted that "every effort was made to destroy confidence both in the Magazine and its editor." ⁵⁰ In spite of these obstacles, the circulation grew.

The Magazine contained articles by many writers such as Jonas Hartzel, U. B. Watkins, and S. M. Clapp, whose views have been or will be looked at in other chapters. In addition to the editor's own views, there were many less influential writers who submitted an occasional article.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act had been passed and the reaction to it was at its peak in the North just prior to the Magazine's coming into

⁴⁸ J. B. Allen to John Boggs, Davenport, Iowa, Jan(uary), 1858, in Magazine (February 1858), 253-254.

⁴⁹ Boggs, "Introductory," 1. ⁵⁰ Ibid., 2.

existence.⁵¹ Boggs, like most abolitionists, did not take kindly to its passage and reproduced an article by Granville Moody as an expression of his feelings.⁵²

In the article, Moody reminded the reader that the bill repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and that "this degrading outrage is consummated, and is now the law of the Land!"⁵³ After seeing "the genius of Liberty,

In grief and sorrow bent,
As o'er some ruined monument,"⁵⁴

Moody asked, what could be done to change this situation? Although he made no affirmative suggestions, he did hope the North would not acquiesce as predicted by "Arnold" Douglas.⁵⁵

His objection to the bill seemed to be in its wording which he thought allowed the principle of non-interference by Congress to be applied to all territories as well as the states made from the Old Northwest. He reasoned that if the Missouri Compromise could be set aside in 1850, so could the Ordinance of 1787.⁵⁶

⁵¹ For a discussion of the Kansas-Nebraska Act see Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 88-159. It passed the Senate March 4, 1854.

⁵² Granville Moody, "Liberty vs. The Nebraska Bill," Magazine (July 1854), 22; Western Christian Advocate (June 14, 1854).

⁵³ Ibid., 23. ⁵⁴ Ibid. ⁵⁵ Ibid. ⁵⁶ Ibid.

To submit to this bill was for him to submit to "aggression of the slave power." Such, in effect, would be to extend the sway of slavery over the North. To allow the slaveholders to possess the territories was the same as allowing an enemy to possess the outworks of a fort. Once this were accomplished, the fort itself would be occupied. But Moody's fear of pushing slavery on the North was not the only one. He cited the Union, which said that the passage of the bill "is necessary to prepare the northern mind for the coming events of the future--the acquisition of Cuba" and other places for the purpose of slavery.⁵⁷ Another objection which Moody and other abolitionists made, was that the Nebraska Bill pointed to the protection of slavery by the National government in all sections, and that slaveholders would be able to move to free-states at their pleasure and hold their slaves while there.⁵⁸

Moody noted that cases brought before the Supreme Court where slavery was an issue went in favor of the slaveholder. But this was to be expected since the judges were all pro-slavery men. He considered the decision in the dispute over the Methodist Book Concern in 1854,⁵⁹ as

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁹ When the Methodist church divided in 1845, a plan had been devised for the division of the Book Concern's property but the Annual Conference would not take action to implement this plan. In 1854 the Methodist Church South went to the courts over the matter and won a decision in the United States Supreme Court. See William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1854), 263-267.

"astonishing, and unparalleled and unjust" and showing the justice Northerners could expect.⁶⁰ Against such decisions "there is no appeal . . . but to arms. The alternative then, will be subject submission or a resort to arms in defense of justice and liberty." ⁶¹

The Kansas-Nebraska Act had, in effect, dissolved the "compact" which had separated the slave and free territories. This voiding of the "compact" had eliminated any grounds for compromise and left only submission of one side to the other. The North was the side which would have to act. This act had also indicated that the Compromise of 1850 had been repudiated. The North was thereby absolved from following any of its mandates.⁶²

In meeting this new crisis, Moody called for a union of anti-slavery men and a turning of a deaf ear to those who called for obedience to the iniquitous law, "rather than obey conscience, reason, and the word of God." ⁶³ They had to show the South that they had been released from the Fugitive Slave Law. The feeling was that the North was now united against slavery for the first time.⁶⁴

In his comments on the article, Boggs seconded what had been said, and called for a uniting of the churches in the North in their opposition to slavery. He hoped that the Christians would "endeavor to realize"

⁶⁰ Moody, op. cit., 24. ⁶¹ Ibid. ⁶² Ibid. ⁶³ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Nevins, op. cit., 152.

these "responsibilities." ⁶⁵

Although in the 1850's the term "abolitionism" was not as emotionally charged as it had been in the 1830's, ⁶⁶ Boggs thought it would be good to define the term as he used it. He admitted that it still startled people in some quarters. He proposed to examine it and see if it were as deadly as was thought by many. He gave the first of Webster's definitions:

The act of abolishing; or the state of being abolished; an annulling; abrogation; utter destruction; as the abolition of laws, decrees, ordinances, rites, customs, debts, etc. ⁶⁷

Boggs pointed out that it was hardly something to be alarmed over.

The term meant nothing more than annulling, abrogating, or destroying.

Webster's second definition was: "The putting an end to slavery; emancipation." ⁶⁸ Boggs did not understand how anyone could get excited over this definition.

Slavery was either right or wrong; if it were right, the abolitionists were wrong; if it were wrong, they were right. The reason he favored the abolitionists was that he considered slavery wrong. In support of this view he quoted David S. Burnet as having said that, "where true Christianity exists, slavery cannot exist." ⁶⁹ If Burnet were right, Christians

⁶⁵ Boggs, "Introductory." ⁶⁶ Barnes, op. cit., 59, 70.

⁶⁷ John Boggs, "Abolitionism," Magazine (October 1854), 113.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 114.

were abolitionists already. He also cited Alexander Campbell as a supporter of this position. In the Harbinger for August, 1854, Campbell defended himself against the Christian Age's representing him as a defender of slavery by use of the Bible. Campbell had called slavery the "maximum of all evils, moral, political or religious . . ." ⁷⁰ Boggs concluded that "if slavery is 'the maximum of all evils' it is undoubtedly the duty of all christians to not only desire, but to pray for and labor for its abolition." ⁷¹

Boggs criticized those preachers who claim to be opposed to slavery, but who disassociated themselves from abolitionism. He said of them:

Now, if slavery is right in the sight of God and religion, they have no right to oppose it; but if it is wrong, as their own language fairly implies, then it is their duty as christians, and even as good citizens, to desire its "abrogation" and "utter destruction;" and that will make them theoretically abolitionists . . . ⁷²

Although Boggs wrote a great deal of the material used in the two publications, ⁷³ many of the long series of articles were written by men other than himself. As already indicated, Jonas Hartzel contributed

⁷⁰ Ibid. Campbell, "Elder Hartzel's Debate," Harbinger (August 1854), 472-474.

⁷¹ Boggs, "Introductory."

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ It is difficult to determine exactly what he did in The Christian Luminary, since a complete file of it is not available.

most of these. Boggs did, however, write one long series of articles under the title, "The Colored Citizen of the North."

This series was aimed at the people of the North and was critical of the treatment afforded the Negro in that section. The series began by citing the passage containing the two great commandments to love God and thy neighbour. Boggs knew of no other group

who more imperiously demand the respectful and candid consideration of the patriots, the philanthropist, and especially the christian, than the colored population of the free states.⁷⁴

The Disciples had overlooked them almost completely in their "benevolent enterprises," as had others. He felt that it was his obligation to awaken the brotherhood to an awareness, of the "intellectual and moral destitution and of the social and legal disabilities"⁷⁵ under which this segment of the population lived.

Boggs pointed out that in the "so called free States" the "peculiar institution" of the South was just as "aggressive" as in the North. He asserted that the "very worst form of slave-holding" was to be found in the North, and among the Disciples themselves.⁷⁶ This occurred in several ways.

One was through slaveholders moving to the free states with their

⁷⁴ John Boggs, "The Colored Citizen of the North," Magazine (November 1854), 171.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

families, while turning over their slaves to the care of taskmasters. The master lived in the North on the labor of slaves and infused "pro-slavery and negro-phobia sentiment both in Church and State." ⁷⁷ This was the real cause of the "laws and usages" that were found in the North, Boggs thought. He also did not believe that many of his readers were aware of the laws against the Negroes. ⁷⁸

To illustrate the laws he spoke of, Boggs reprinted parts of an article from the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Standard. This article pointed out to the citizens of that state, that Indiana had many laws aimed at the Negro, and he hoped that through the article the enlightened public might be moved to eliminate them. Negroes were, by the Constitution, denied the right of suffrage. They were also forbidden to settle in the state. Contracts they made were not valid, and a fine of not less than five-hundred dollars was levied against anyone who employed or encouraged a Negro to remain in the state. This was applied to Negroes and mulattoes after November, 1851. The legislature enacted a law in 1853 forbidding persons with one-eighth Negro blood being a witness in a trial where a white person was concerned. They were not permitted to attend the public schools, nor were they taxed for their support. ⁷⁹ These laws were similar to those of Ohio. ⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., 172. ⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid. (February 1855), 230-231. ⁸⁰ See above, pp. 4-6.

In his comment on this, Boggs felt that the curb on testimony by Negroes was to prevent justice in a time when legal reform was under-way. The exclusion of Negroes from the common schools was in direct violation of the Constitution which said that they were to be open to all equally.⁸¹ In summing up the meaning of these laws Boggs said:

What better could be expected of a people guilty of such a series of iniquities, than that they should be found in political and social sympathy with the slave power, ready to obey "with alacrity" its negro-catching mandate? Verily, our first work of repentance, of reform, lies within our own borders--even at our very doors. May the spread of liberal education and of the spirit of Christianity hasten our preparation for it! ⁸²

Boggs did not believe that these laws could be justified. They were a "burlesque on both christianity (sic) and republicanism." ⁸³ Christian duty was implied when Boggs asked, "have we of the north nothing to do with slavery?" ⁸⁴ Slavery had caused the development of prejudice in the North which was "crushing the energies. . . of our colored citizens." ⁸⁵ Christians were obligated to labor so as to "revolutionize public sentiment" so "that equal and exact justice" would be given to all citizens. Unless this were done, the citizens of the North would continue "to be a laughing-stock not only for enlightened nations

⁸¹ Boggs, "Introductory," 233. ⁸² Ibid., 234.

⁸³ Ibid. (April 1855), 287. ⁸⁴ Ibid., 288. ⁸⁵ Ibid.

on the other side of the Atlantic, but even for our slaveholding brethren themselves." 86

Although Boggs had already indicated that he did not believe that American slavery was at all sanctioned in the Bible, it was not until April, 1855, that he attempted to prove his point. At that time he published, with some comments, an article from the Louisville Examiner. This article asserted that Henry Ward Beecher had said that slavery when it existed in New England was different from that which existed in the South. In the South it was similar to that of Rome. The slave could not hold property in the South, and the master was not always liable if he killed a slave. In New England the laws of Israel applied. Slaves could hold property and the master was liable for murder if he killed a slave. The Hebrew law as applied in New England moved toward the slave's comfort and education. 87

The pro-slavery men argued that slavery was permitted among the Jews; but, this article asserted, none of these pro-slavery men were willing to have slavery as permitted among the Jews, practiced in the United States. There was a great deal of difference between the two institutions. Under the Jews no slave could be kept longer than six years without his own consent. A master who killed a slave while administering punishment was guilty of murder. A slave injured permanently by

86 Ibid. 87 Ibid., 289-290.

his master became free at once. A female slave could demand the privileges of a wife under certain conditions, and was free if this were refused. Runaway slaves were not given up if they came from outside the country.⁸⁸ For Southern slavery to be of the Bible, it had to include these features.

While the Jews freed their slaves every six years, the United States was still, in some areas at least, attempting to find solutions and ways to free its slaves. As to methods for doing this, Boggs found in an article in "Frederick Douglass' Paper,"⁸⁹ the answer, which was, simple abandonment of the practice by slaveholders. If the nation were to be saved from the curse of God, Boggs felt that this must be done. Although the majority of the Christians in the South were "in the dark" on slavery, they could not plead they had no means of ridding themselves of it. The reason they were in the dark was that the preachers were pro-slavery and sold slaves, and the periodicals were silent on the subject, a silence which gave support.⁹⁰

The solution to the problem in the South was to have a new group of preachers. The question was, however, who would go on such a mission? Such a mission "would be a much better work than to go on a mission to any heathen land . . ." ⁹¹ If the church could be purified,

⁸⁸ Ibid., 290-293.

⁸⁹ John Boggs, "How Can Slavery be Abolished?" Magazine (May 1855), 322.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 323. ⁹¹ Ibid.

Boggs believed that slavery, war, and intemperance would be eliminated, and peace would come on earth.⁹²

That slavery was beyond the ability of the Christian and the philanthropist, was not true. There were several plans in which the politician could be interested, but Boggs thought that aside from these, there was a purely moral solution. If every religious denomination in the country severed all connections with the institution, it would come to an end.⁹³

In the Harbinger for December, 1856, Alexander Campbell⁹⁴ recommended that Boggs read Philemon on the matter of slavery. Boggs accepted Campbell's suggestion and in the February, 1857, issue of the Magazine presented his views on Paul's epistle. After pointing out that the Magazine was not solely devoted to slavery, Boggs related that in a conversation, to which Campbell was a party, the subject had been brought up and Campbell had asserted that "the blighting effect of slavery could be seen on the very fence corners of Virginia."⁹⁵ Boggs stated that in this conversation and at other times, he received the impression that Campbell looked on slavery in about the same light as he did. However, Boggs

⁹² Ibid. ⁹³ Ibid., (March 1857), 266-268.

⁹⁴ Alexander Campbell, "Our Anniversaries in Cincinnati," Harbinger (December 1856), 715.

⁹⁵ John Boggs, "Paul's Letter to Philemon," Magazine (February 1857), 226.

found that Campbell was emotional over the abolitionists.⁹⁶

Boggs found that in Campbell's writing concerning this subject, Campbell had made many statements which indicated that he favored slavery. Boggs did not think a case could be made from Philemon to sustain American slavery or to support the Fugitive Slave Law. There were several reasons why this was true. Among them were: (1) Onesimus must be shown to have been a slave in the American usage of the term. This was not possible since the Greek term used, "doulos" did not necessarily mean slave.⁹⁷ (2) Following an analysis of the use of the term and other terms meaning servant or slave found in the New Testament, Boggs asserted that it must be shown that Onesimus was returned as a slave and involuntarily. This was not possible, since Paul could not have sent Onesimus back unless he had wanted to return.⁹⁸

For the sake of argument, Boggs assumed that "doulos" did mean slave, and that Paul did have the power to send Onesimus back. But even if this were granted, the passage did not support the American Fugitive Slave Law, for Paul did not send him back as a slave but as "a Christian brother."⁹⁹ Boggs said that Philemon,

may esteem him (Onesimus) highly as a Christian, and may treat him with kindness; but as long as he regards him as his property,

⁹⁶ Ibid. ⁹⁷ Ibid., 227. It also may mean a servant.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 228. ⁹⁹ Ibid., 230.

his feelings towards him must be different from those entertained towards other christians.¹⁰⁰

Boggs felt that any objective consideration of the letter would lead to the conclusion that it was not a pro-slavery epistle. It failed to show that Onesimus was in fact a slave, that he did not return of his own free will, and that he was returned as a slave. Boggs ended the article by citing a conclusion from Isaac Errett's "Design of Civil Government," a sermon preached at Warren, Ohio.¹⁰¹ Errett had asserted that there was no evidence that Onesimus was a slave, or that he did not return voluntarily.

One of the last long articles in the Magazine in which Boggs expressed his view on slavery, was a review of Howell Cobb's A Scriptural Examination of the Institution of Slavery in the United States, with Its Objects and Purposes.¹⁰²

Cobb took the Bible as his authority.¹⁰³ Slavery, he found, was established in "the first dispensation or the dispensation of the Father."¹⁰⁴ Boggs thought there were three dispensations in the Bible, but he did not

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 231.

¹⁰² Howell Cobb, A Scriptural Examination of the Institution of Slavery in the United States, (Perry, Georgia: 1856). Cobb was the United States Senator from Georgia.

¹⁰³ John Boggs, "Cobb's Slavery," Magazine (June 1857), 353.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 354.

think they were based on the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁰⁵ He disagreed with Cobb, who thought that the institution of slavery was started in the first dispensation and recognized by the other two. This, Boggs said, "Is just as destitute of evidence in the Bible as" baptism is a continuance of circumcision or the Lord's Supper of the Passover.¹⁰⁶

Cobb asserted that slavery, established by the church, protected the slave against unnecessary cruelty of the master. The master who killed a slave was to be punished and in some cases the punishment was death. He also believed that American slavery was the same as that of the Bible. To this Boggs responded by pointing out that similar laws existed on the law books of the Southern states, but they were not enforced. In fact, Boggs thought the law which prevented the colored man from offering testimony in the court effectively did away with any laws designed to protect him.¹⁰⁷

Although Cobb thought that American slavery was the same as that in the Bible, Boggs pointed out that this was not the case, since in the Bible slaves were freed every jubilee year. This was not the case in American slavery, for it was perpetual slavery. Also in Jewish slavery the relationships of husband and wife, and of parents and children, were protected, which was not true in American slavery. Again, in Jewish slavery, religious instruction was provided for, but in American slavery

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 355. ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 355-356.

it was a violation of the law to teach a slave to read. For the Disciple abolitionists the ability to read the Bible was essential to religious instruction. Finally, Boggs did not think the slaves were chattel in Jewish slavery, for there were no provisions in the Bible for their transfer. If the chattel aspects of slavery were removed from American slavery its vitality would disappear.¹⁰⁸

Cobb divided the abolitionists into four groups. First, were the free-soilers who denied being abolitionists, and wished slavery contained, but did not press for its destruction. Second, were the "conditional emancipationists," who wanted the South to pass acts of emancipation which would gradually free the slaves. Third, were the "unconditional emancipationists" who wanted abolition of slavery at once. Fourth, were the "amalgamationists" who also wanted abolition of slavery at once, but in addition wanted a division of property and amalgamation with the whites.¹⁰⁹

Cobb considered abolitionism a "religious delusion;" for this reason, political solutions had not been accepted by the abolitionists. This delusion was traceable directly to "misguided religious teachers." He thought that abolitionism had done an inconceivable amount of mischief. "It invades the sanctuary of law, and strikes the balance from the hand of justice; it tramples on the constitution; it repudiates the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 356-358. ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 358-359.

Bible . . ." 110

Boggs was in agreement with Cobb that abolition was not a political but a religious question, but not for the same reason.¹¹¹ He did not differ on the classification of abolitionists except for the fourth class. This group, the amalgamationists, would prefer slavery to abolition, "for just in the ratio in which you abolish slavery you also abolish amalgamation." 112 More amalgamation occurred in slavery than out of it. So far as justice was concerned, Boggs thought that in the North the disgraceful laws which denied equal justice to the blacks were enacted by pro-slavery men.¹¹³ Boggs denied that abolitionists repudiated the Bible. It was repudiated by slaveholders and their Northern friends who did not follow the law of love.

In summing up the argument Boggs said:

If a congregation is divided on the discussion of the temperance question, it is whisky and not the advocacy of temperance that is accountable; and if agitating the morality of holding slaves should offend anyone in the church, it is slavery and not its discussion that should be held responsible. 114

Condemning abolitionism for the problem was unjust since the slaveholder caused the problem, not the abolitionists.

There were articles in The Christian Luminary on the subject of slavery and from the issues available it appears that the arguments

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 359. ¹¹¹ Ibid., 360. ¹¹² Ibid. ¹¹³ Ibid. ¹¹⁴ Ibid., 362.

and discussions were about the same as those in the Magazine. There were, however, some Disciple abolitionists who wrote only a single article or a short series which were published in the Magazine. Their views are also of some interest.

CHAPTER XI

VIEWS OF OTHER DISCIPLE ABOLITIONISTS

As the Civil War approached, it appeared that more and more Disciples became concerned about the slavery problem. Many of these people wrote to the editors of the periodicals and occasionally quotations from their letters were printed. A few even wrote an article or two which expressed their thinking on the problem. Two such persons will be discussed in this chapter. One is B. U. Watkins of Ohio, and the other is an unknown writer of Bloomington, Illinois. Both contributed a short series of articles to the Magazine. Watkins' series dealt with several phases of the slavery question, but the second writer was concerned only with how slavery could be abolished.

Watkins' series was entitled simply "Slavery." He indicated that he was not going "to hold up to public odium, the worst side of slavery,"¹ for this was not his purpose. Instead, he was going to confine his argument to three questions: ". . . Does the Bible sanction slavery? Is it founded in justice? Is it right to hold a slave as property?"²

There was no excuse, Watkins thought, for slavery in the modern age regardless of what conditions had been in the past. The Bible had shed

¹ B. U. Watkins, "Slavery," Magazine (July 1854), 20. ² Ibid.

its light on this subject and had shown it to be oppressive, but this light had not been reflected in the lives of Christians. This was a serious problem. The infidels were making use of this moral defect among Christians in their argument against the Bible. Because of Christian slaveholders the infidels were placing Christianity in an inferior moral position. The infidels were demonstrating that the Bible was inconsistent with its rigid code of justice on the one hand, and its sanction of slavery on the other. Watkins challenged his readers to do something about these charges of the infidels. He wondered if the infidels would gain the moral victory. The charge that the Bible sanctioned slavery was "a slander against God." Watkins was,

alarmed to see professors of religion arrayed against the cause of humanity--taking part with the oppressor against the oppressed. -- While the infidels are rejoicing to put religious people to shame, by holding them up before the world, as the advocates of oppression and despotism.³

He saw in this a twofold purpose on the part of the infidels. First, it appeared that only the unbelievers were concerned with the cause of the oppressed. The slaveholder at the same time gained the impression that only the infidels were opposed to him.

Second, the Christians were brought before the world as the upholders of sin. This was partly caused by the infidels' making the Bible appear to support slavery and the failure of many Christians to know

³ Ibid., 21.

what to do. All this meant that, "It is but a small choice to the modern skeptic, whether he abolishes slavery without the Bible, or abolishes the Bible by slavery."⁴ If he were able to do the first, then he could point out that unbelief was able to work a great reform, and this would reflect unfavorably on the Bible.

If the other alternative were followed, the infidels could gain their object more directly since this would be a direct triumph of infidelity. This would remove all morality and the cause of the oppressed would itself die and their condition would be worse than ever, for the tyranny of the master would be left without restraint.

In the second installment of the series, Watkins tried to show that if slavery in the United States were placed under the restrictions found in the Bible, it would soon end. He quoted Deuteronomy 23:15-16;

You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you; he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall choose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best

He thought that this restriction would end all involuntary slavery. If this law of the Bible were the law of the United States, the abolitionists would have no room for complaint.⁶

The law which commanded the Hebrews not to oppress the stranger was one which would curb abuse of slavery as well as eliminate

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid. (September 1854), 81-82.

it. The Hebrews were reminded many times that they had been strangers in Egypt.

A third law which would eliminate slavery, were it enforced in the United States, was the "Jubilee" at which time all slaves were freed. This law said that liberty was to be proclaimed to all inhabitants of the land, and since the South counted the slaves for representation in Congress they must be inhabitants, and thus would come under this law.⁷

The fourth law that Watkins took up was that no master could sell his slave. This law came from silence, since the Bible did not say anything about the selling of servants, but did have rules about their purchase. He noted that there were laws covering the sale of everything else, but none about slaves. For him this silence implied they could not be sold.⁸

He concluded from all this that if the slaveholders were going to claim the sanction of the Bible for their slaveholding, they should apply the laws of the Bible which regulated it.

. . . Let him procure such a fugitive slave law as is sanctioned by Scripture. Secondly, Let (sic) him love his servant as himself. Thirdly, Let such slaveholders establish a jubilee year in which all servants shall be free. And fourthly, Let there be no more chattelhood in slavery; no selling of slaves from one to another,

⁷ Ibid., 82. The Jubilee year was every fifty years and is described in Leviticus 25.

⁸ Ibid.

and the glorious day-dream of liberty-men will soon be realized.⁹

Commenting on the first ten verses of I Timothy 6, Watkins noted that the first three verses were used as the "everlasting quietus" of the slavery agitation.¹⁰ He did not think the claim of the apologist which rested on these verses would stand up if these verses were closely examined. All the New Testament had to say about the relation of master and servants would hold true even though slavery did not exist. It had to be kept in mind, he emphasized, that there was a distinction between a servant and slave. A slave was a servant, but he was also property. Because of this, much of what was said about servants could not be applied to slaves. One could and should do what was "just and equal" to a servant, but this did not apply to a piece of property. Watkins did not think the servant-master relation would ever be abolished, but the relation of master-slave should be at once. This latter action should take place because slavery "is dangerous to the master, morally, physically and spiritually; and in the highest degree pernicious and unjust to the slave."¹¹

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ I Timothy 6:1-3; Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.

Teach and urge these duties. If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, he is puffed up . . .

¹¹ Watkins, op. cit. (November 1854), 151.

He emphasized that commands of the New Testament concerning the relationship of servant and master were necessary, and that these commands could not apply to the relationship of slave and master. He offered as proof Ephesians 6:5-9.¹² Watkins believed that the statement in these verses was reciprocal. "Servants must do service with good will, as to the Lord and not to men. And the master must do 'the same thing unto them.' "¹³

If the slaveholder objects that this would eliminate the relation of master and slave, Watkins said, this would not be the case, since these passages have nothing to do with master and slave. However, if they want to apply these commands to slavery, then the relation will disappear, because:

. . . If the direction to the servants are equally applicable to the master, then, as servants are required to obey their masters, masters must obey their servants! And they must do it "with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ! Does not either of these positions put slavery out of the question? ¹⁴

Watkins obviously misapplied the meaning of the word "obey" in this place.

¹² Ephesians 6:5-9; Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as man-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours, is in heaven, and that there is not partiality with him.

¹³ Watkins, op. cit., 152. ¹⁴ Ibid.

His application would have eliminated discipline between the master and servant. In addition he warned the slaveholder that God would not respect him more because he was a slaveholder.

In his interpretation of I Timothy 6:1-6, Watkins said the term "yoke" meant servants who served pagan masters. This idea was corroborated in the second verse by the reference to those having believing masters. Thus, there were two classes of servants, those having believing masters and those having pagan masters. The servant was under the yoke,

not because it was right for the masters to take all of his labor, but because the servant had a right to suffer wrong, and when he had thus suffered, he would be sure he had done something for the advancement of the cause of truth; this gentleness under oppression, would keep the doctrine from being "blasphemed." ¹⁵

Christ taught that many things must be endured, but the Christian must not retaliate. This means there could be no doctrine of insubordination taught in the New Testament.

Those having believing masters were to respect them because they were brethren and "partakers." Watkins noted that when broken down to "part" and "takers" the word indicated that the relation was one which was shared. The master takes only a part, not all. This, of course, could apply only to servants and not slaves.

To the final article, Watkins added the subtitle "Slavery had

¹⁵ Ibid. (December 1854), 173.

no Redeeming Feature." The article was introduced by his asserting that slavery had nothing to recommend it to the good man. It operated not from the principles of love, but from the principle of "might gives right." While the Bible said that "love worketh no ill to its neighbour," slavery did nothing but work "ill to everybody." ¹⁶

The one who suffered the most from slavery, Watkins thought, was not the slave, but the "oppressor." He was a coward. He suffered from fears which he could not mention. He was more afraid of his slaves than they were of him. One advantage claimed for slavery was that the master was able to live without work. But such riches did not bring joy. In addition to this, idleness became a curse on the members of slaveholder's family, since to rear his children in idleness was "to school them in sin and shame." Contact with slavery caused the slaveholder's children to become vicious, turbulent and cruel. These effects were found in "time" while other effects were found in "eternity." To acquire wealth, the master had ruined the slave for time and eternity. ¹⁷

Since compulsory labor was better than idleness, Watkins thought the slave was slowly improving, while the master was degenerating because of his laziness. Their situations would be reversed because of this. ¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid. (July 1856), 24.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Watkins' view of the South was a stereotype. He appears not to have had first-hand information. This series was published before the appearance of Frederick Law Olmsted's A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States in 1856, which gave a different picture.

Watkins did not think the North would be able to take the insulting language of the South very long. The conflict which would occur could be avoided by "a kind of Jewish and Samaritan friendship (being) allowed to subsist between the two great wings of this confederacy . . ." ¹⁹ Since the "intellect and energy" of the North were being diffused in the South, the equilibrium was being upset.

He ended his remarks by saying that the North should respond to the South's plea to be let alone.

Let no Northern man go South. Let no Southern youth be received into our institutions of learning. If a Southerner come among us, treat him well so far as the wants of nature are concerned, but give no information on any subject whatever. "Let him alone." Dont (sic) even exhort him to free his slaves; He has been deaf to all our entreaties. He is joined to his "idols, Let him alone." ²⁰

Beginning in the February, 1858, issue of the Magazine was a series entitled "How to Abolish American Slavery." The series, by an unnamed author, was not complete when the Magazine was terminated and The Christian Luminary started.

In the first of the series the author said that he had been held back from expressing his views for several reasons. One was the criticism of the slaveholder by the abolitionist who offered no equitable plan for the elimination of the evil. The other was the government's failure

¹⁹ Watkins, op. cit., 25.

²⁰ Ibid.

to use funds available following the payment of the national debt to that end.²¹

One vital item for the elimination of slavery, this author thought, was an equitable compensation. The writer proposed that funds be raised by increasing the tariff. This would not only raise money, but encourage business at home. These funds would be placed in a general fund for the purpose of emancipation.

The author suggested the government set up a "bureau of Emancipation." This bureau would have the power and means to carry out a program which would include various functions. One task would be to develop a territory suitable for the needs of the colored race. The bureau would have the responsibility of surveying and platting the territory into subdivisions. To induce settlement it would give forty acres to each single man, and eighty acres to each married man who lived on it for five years. The bureau would also employ agents to present the advantages of the territory. They would do this through contact with free persons of color; they would present the program to slaveholders who would like to be rid of their slaves; they would then negotiate with slaveholders for the purchase of their slaves for part of their market value; those not available on this basis would be purchased at full price;

²¹ "How to Abolish Slavery," Magazine (February 1858), 234. The author lived near Bloomington, Illinois.

and finally the agents would pay what price was necessary to get the slaves freed. Another task of the bureau would be educating the new population in all forms of learning so that they would be able to govern and support themselves.²²

In the last article of these articles on "How to Abolish Slavery," the author set forth his proof for the equality of the human race. First, all men came from the same source, God, the Creator, and on earth from father Adam. Second, the bodies of all men function alike regardless of their condition in society. Finally, all men come to the same death and go to the same appropriate reward.²³

The author was concerned not only with the social evils of slavery, which he indicated by citing the Harbinger's report of the Southampton Massacre of 1831, but he was concerned also with the economic evils. He drew some conclusion in this area from a report published in the Richmond Enquirer, November, 1831. This article noted that much of the valuable land of Virginia had become depleted and the economy had suffered generally because of the labor practices and accompanying farming methods. The author suggested that the drop in land prices was due to slavery. Slavery had led to idleness among the white people. Slavery had caused many people to leave Virginia. The article suggested that it was time for the legislature to take action to

²² Ibid., 279. ²³ Ibid. (June 1858), 355-356.

stop this by moving toward the elimination of slavery. The method suggested was a tax on slaves. The revenue could be applied to the removal of slaves because of the drop in value, as well as aid in the removal of free Negroes. Some could be used for the purchase of the remaining slaves. This reduction in the value of Negroes in Virginia would increase the export of Virginia Negroes, which would also aid in ridding Virginia of slaves.²⁴

These two articles are illustrative of many expressions sent to Boggs by Disciple abolitionists. They indicate that abolitionist views were widespread. Most of these expressions came in the form of letters to the editor. Some came from women and not all were from the North.²⁵ Controversy did develop among the Disciples over the abolitionist activity on behalf of the slaves. Not all abolitionist activity was limited to articles in magazines.

²⁴ Ibid. , 357-359.

²⁵ Boggs printed a letter from "Sister M. C." of North Bloomfield, Ohio, which was rather detailed in its expression of her feelings, Magazine (December 1857), 174-175.

CHAPTER XII

CONTROVERSY: SLAVERY AND PREACHERS, FREE-SOIL, AND MISSIONS

Controversy became one of the outlets for the tensions of the abolitionists and the pro-slavery Disciples. Controversy occurred over several issues: one was over the selling of slaves by two prominent Disciples, John I. Rogers, and Dr. James Barclay; another was the expression by missionaries of free-soil ideas; a third, was expression of anti-slavery views by college students in Disciple colleges. In these controversies the bitterness of feeling between the two sides came out. The controversies as carried on in the press over slavery's relation to the Bible were gentlemanly affairs compared with those where personalities were involved. In this chapter the first two of these areas of controversy will be discussed.

One of the first debates developed over the selling of a slave by a prominent Kentucky preacher. This exchange of words started when John Boggs mentioned in an article that a Kentucky preacher had sold a slave. Boggs gave the details as he understood them in the article.¹ Part of this controversy centered around Boggs not having correct details,

¹ John Boggs, "Reply," Magazine (February 1855), 248. See above pp. 172-174 for the context of the article.

and his opponent, John R. Howard, made this the issue.

Boggs asserted in the article that in some of the slave states, selling of slaves by preachers was considered trivial. To illustrate his point he mentioned that a certain preacher in Kentucky (he did not give his name), had sold a male slave to a speculator. This slave had come into this preacher's possession through his wife's family. The preacher had made arrangements with the speculator to take the slave at some place away from his home. This being done, the slave was placed in the Maysville Jail until he could be shipped. Boggs also asserted that the reason the slave was sold was that he had been taught to read by the younger brother of the preacher involved. This preacher had bought himself a "conspicuous standing" in one of the benevolent societies of the brotherhood.²

By August, 1855, Boggs' article and reference to the preacher had caused a reaction. It seems that a few weeks after the publication of the article, Boggs was "assailed" by a "pro-slavery brother" who asked where Boggs received his information. It happened that Jonas Hartzel, the informant, was with Boggs at the time. During the discussion Hartzel corrected "one or two unimportant items" such as that the jail was at Carlisle rather than at Maysville, and that he had not stated

² Ibid., 249.

that the slave had been sold because he knew how to read.³ At this point the preacher was identified as John I. Rogers, a prominent Kentucky minister.

In a letter giving his side of the issue, Rogers was more concerned with the association which had been made with the benevolent societies, than with his personal connection with the article as a slave seller. He sent to Boggs, through R. N. Bishop, his representative, letters from the officers of the Elizaville Church, from Congressmen L. W. Andrews, and L. M. Cox, stating the facts of the case. In addition there was a letter from the slave trader giving the details of the transaction. Rogers said that the boy, as he called him, was sold at a reduced price with the understanding that he would be found a home in Kentucky.⁴

The letter from the church stated that the reason for the sale was that the boy was a "pest to the neighbourhood." He had not been raised in the family of Rogers' former wife and was a stranger to the area. The letter affirmed that he was sold with the understanding he would not be sent South. It also asserted that the ability to read the Bible was considered as an asset among servants and that Rogers was eager

³ John Boggs, "Negro-Selling Preachers," Magazine (August 1855), 57.

⁴ John I. Rogers to John Boggs, Millersburg, Kentucky, (18)55, in Magazine (August 1855), 57-58.

that his slaves learn to read.⁵

In his comments on these letters Boggs replied that since the signers of these letters were presumed slaveholders, he considered their judgement of the case one-sided. He believed that any slaveholder could get a number of congressmen to affirm that he was a good master of a "half-naked, half-fed, and over-worked gang of negroes."⁶ He noted that in his early days in Clinton County, Ohio, Rogers "was a flaming abolitionist."⁷ With all this evidence in his favor, Boggs wondered why Rogers' brother, William, should have brought up the subject to Benjamin Franklin, and Franklin should have approached Boggs on the matter. Regardless of all the favorable letters, Rogers still stood before the world as a slaveholder and a man-seller. Selling a man was as much against the Christian law as stealing him.⁸

That Rogers desired his slaves to learn to read was commendable, but teaching slaves to read was for Boggs "too palpably contradictory with the whole system of slavery to claim any serious notice from us."⁹ Beside, it was against the law in many states.

That Boggs and Rogers were emphasizing different aspects of

⁵ W. H. Darnall and D. L. Eckman to (John Boggs) in Boggs, "Negro-Selling Preachers," Magazine (August 1855), 57.

⁶ Boggs., "Negro-Selling Preachers," 58. ⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. ⁹ Ibid., 58-59.

the matter is easily seen. Boggs was concerned that Rogers had sold a man. Rogers was attempting to justify his actions as being the best thing he could do under the circumstances. As others enter the discussion the emphasis again changed.

Boggs did not understand how Rogers' being a slaveholder and a slave-seller, could affect the benevolent societies to which he belonged. Rogers was concerned about this. Boggs pointed out that many who bought life memberships and directorships in these organizations were slaveholders. The treasuries of all three of these organizations were full of money "polluted by the price of blood, . . . procured by the unrequited labor of the poor degraded slave, in whose veins sometimes flowed the blood of his pitiless master." ¹⁰ However, if by this controversy the brotherhood had been enlightened concerning the,

Heartlessness, . . . imbecility, . . . unscripturality, and . . . utter inefficiency, (of these benevolent societies) we thank God that we have been permitted to render the cause of christianity such essential service. ¹¹

The societies came in for some criticism. Boggs asked if the Bible society had distributed ten free Bibles in the past two years. He asked what the missionary society had done other than send a slaveholder to Jerusalem, who did not teach his own slaves to read the Bible. And also he wondered what the publication society had done. ¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., 59. ¹¹ Ibid. ¹² Ibid.

In August, 1855, The Christian Age joined the controversy,¹³ which evoked a response from Boggs. In Boggs' letter to the editor of The Christian Age, he indicated that the editor had published three columns of editorial on the issue. This represented a good deal of space since The Christian Age was a full size newspaper sheet. Boggs charged that W. W. Eaton, the editor, had attempted to "magnify circumstantial inaccuracies into intentional misrepresentations, thereby forfeiting respect," and Boggs did not feel disposed to follow him in his tirade of abuse.¹⁴ Boggs stated his feelings graphically.

If the moral taste of his readers is so vitiated as to relish such putrid dishes, he will no doubt receive the pecuniary reward which alone could impel him to such a course; but as far as the patrons of the Magazine are concerned, we feel confident we could not displease them more than by prostituting its columns to the publication of a personal altercation with one who professes to be a Christian editor.¹⁵

Eaton felt that if this were Boggs' defense, he was in need of help. It appears from what Eaton said, that he had charged Boggs with fabricating "five-sixths" of the story about Rogers. To this he noted that Boggs made only minor comment, asserting that he was wrong "in

¹³ This issue of The Christian Age is not available. A nearly complete file is in The American Baptist Historical Society's library.

¹⁴ John Boggs, "The Age and Its Editor," in W. W. Eaton, "Elder John Boggs--Again," Christian Age (September 20, 1855), 150. See "Discussion of the Slavery Question," Magazine (February 1855), 245-251.

¹⁵ Ibid.

one or two unimportant items." These, which have been mentioned above, Eaton did not think were so minor. He felt that in making them, Boggs had sinned and should confess it. He continued by saying that

If Elder Boggs had been blessed with a sufficiency of the grace of humility, to have acknowledged that he had even erred, in giving publicity to what he had dreamed, or imagined, for truth, he would have saved some anxiety; and what would be to a sensitive mind not a little mortification.¹⁶

It was obvious from what has been said already, that Boggs was not attempting to report the minute details of the transaction between Rogers and the slave dealer, but to show that Rogers was a slave-seller. Boggs' point was made, and for him the details of which jail the slave was kept in, seemed of minor importance. This picking at the minor points, shows in part the bitter feelings of some of the Disciples toward the abolitionists among them. Boggs was a good target since he published the only avowed Disciple abolitionist paper.

Boggs was not free from sharp attacks himself. Eaton took offense at Boggs' assertion that he "wrote that exposé for 'pecuniary reward.' " Eaton said that Boggs could not back up this "baseless assertion" if called on to do so.¹⁷

Boggs published a letter from Jonas Hartzel, which he thought refuted "the foul slanders" of the editor of The Christian Age, who sought to defend "man-stealing." Boggs again stated that he had evidence

¹⁶ Eaton, op. cit., 150. ¹⁷ Ibid.

that what he published was just what had been reported to him.¹⁸

Boggs' main point, as has been said, was that a prominent preacher of the Disciples had sold a man. Boggs pointed out,

That Elder John I. Rogers sold a fellow man-- that he made arrangements with the purchaser to take him at a certain mill in the neighbourhood--that he sent his slave to the mill accordingly without letting him know that he was sold, and that he was thrown into the Carlisle jail to wait the convenience of his purchaser to take him away, are the facts that have not been denied even by the editor of the Age (sic).¹⁹

These were the things which the abolitionists were opposing. That the details were not clear had no bearing on the case.

Boggs emphasized that it was not his intention to place before the public the name of the person involved in this "man-selling" affair; but, rather to show "the pro-slavery influence that existed among . . . (the Disciples) as a denomination, even at the north . . ." ²⁰

The details of how the information came to be known in the first place were given by Jonas Hartzel. He said that he heard of the incident from Benjamin Franklin in March, 1854. Later he received more information about it from a lady at New Antioch, Clinton County, Ohio, who was a relative of Rogers. She stated that this slave had been taught to read by William Rogers and that his intelligence was the cause of the

¹⁸ John Boggs, "Persecuted But Not Forsaken," Magazine (October 1855), 120.

¹⁹ Ibid., 120-121. ²⁰ Ibid., 121.

sale. The information about the jail came from one or the other of these informants.²¹

Hartzel regretted that he had become a party to this affair. He considered Eaton's first and second articles on the subject "very bitter;" "they are in the spirit of crucify, crucify him."²² But he also thought that Boggs had not responded with his usual kindness. Hartzel said that "to charge a man with deliberate falsehood in regard to a conversation passed a year ago, is to evince a great readiness to condemn."²³ At the same time he reminded Boggs "that much more kindness and forbearance will be expected from the man who pleads the cause of the oppressed, than the man who takes sides with the oppressor."²⁴

The Christian Age answered Hartzel's letter by asserting that it was not pro-slavery. It then proceeded to outline what its editor considered the "fabrications" of Boggs. These were the center of the controversy for Eaton.

The five points which we termed fabrications were the following:

1. Elder John Boggs published that the slave "had been raised in the family of Elder Rogers' former wife."
2. That he was sold to be taken "to the Southern market."
3. That he was sold because he had been "taught to read the Bible."

²¹ Jonas Hartzel to John Boggs, Davenport, (Iowa), Oct(ober), 16, 1855, in ibid.

²² Ibid., 112.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

4. That the money received for him purchased a "conspicuous standing in the so called benevolent societies got up by our brethren."

5. And, that from the time he was accused, in this offense, of giving publicity to incorrect statements until, he received a certain letter from Elder Rogers, "the matter had rested," &c. , &c.²⁵

From what has been indicated above, it seems that at this late date Eaton was now pressing issues which had been corrected. Boggs had shown that possibly his information had been wrong in two or three places. Boggs' statement about the purchase of the place in the benevolent societies did not necessarily imply that the money obtained from the sale of this sale was used for this purpose, but more likely that such high positions could be purchased.

In Eaton's explanation of the five points of his charge, he pointed out that Boggs had said nothing about the first one. The letter which came from Hartzel, however, did mention where this information came from, and this would seem to be all that was necessary under the circumstances. That a charge by an abolitionist would break up a slaveholding family, as Eaton asserted, does not seem likely.

Eaton also thought that the second charge had been left unanswered. Here again Boggs was at the mercy of his informant for his information and had published Rogers' statement, indicating that the slave was not to be sold in the Southern market. And again, the place where he was

²⁵ W. W. Eaton, "From the N. W. Christian Magazine," Christian Age (December 27, 1855), 206.

sold was not the issue, but rather that he had been sold. The same is true of the third charge. Although Eaton attempted to make this the "most serious charge of all," he was willing to retract the charge that Boggs fabricated it.

As to the fourth charge, we have already indicated that Eaton's interpretation was not the only possible one. Eaton asserted that Boggs knew that Rogers was a member of the societies before the slave was sold.

Eaton differed with Boggs on the fifth statement. He did not think that Boggs had allowed the matter to rest.²⁶ Boggs had made the allusion in the February issue of the Magazine. He did not again mention the matter until the August issue. It appears that the first mention of Rogers by name occurred prior to the August issue.²⁷ So far as the Magazine was concerned, Boggs did allow the matter to rest until August, and then responded only because of the charges and statements made in The Christian Age.²⁸

Eaton also charged that the purpose of the Magazine was to produce a division between the Disciples North and South. This, of course, was not true, but if any division occurred it would be caused by those who refused to give up the sin of slavery.

W. B. Hunt of Hopedale, Hamilton County, Ohio, wrote Boggs, supporting him in the discussion. Hunt pointed out in his letter that

²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Boggs, "Negro-Selling Preachers," 57. ²⁸ Ibid.

although the slave was not sold because he could read, as Boggs originally reported, he was sold,

because his good Christian master did not want him shot; he was so bad he could not manage him, and therefore he would sell him to someone else, send him to some other neighbourhood.²⁹

For Hunt this act of selling a bad man to another neighbourhood was an unchristian act in itself. He asked who should be better able to correct the morals of this "degraded creature" than his Christian master?

Rogers had not followed the Christian mandate to love his neighbour in selling the man he could not control himself.

In his comments on these letters, Boggs suggested that the morality discussed by Hunt, and the actions and their causes certified to by the Elizaville church, were the same as the church member who purchased a horse possessed of some defect, and at the first opportunity sold him to someone else who was unsuspecting, without mentioning the fault. As for a slave who became a "pest," Boggs raised the question: How did he become one? For Boggs it was his condition in life which caused him to be that way. Theft and robbery were the daily routine of his life.

Robbed himself of his daily earnings, robbed of his personal liberty, robbed of his manhood, robbed of all the social and domestic relations that make life worth living, and that too by a man who professed

²⁹ W. B. Hunt to John Boggs, Hopedale, Hamilton Co(nty), O(hio), Aug(ust), 21, 1855, in John Boggs, "The Neighbourhood Pest," Magazine (October 1855), 123.

to be a preacher of righteousness, the standard of morality must necessarily be rather low, and we confess we would much rather answer at the bar of God for the petty larceny of the slave, than the wholesale robbery of the master.³⁰

Rogers' slaves were not the only ones involved in controversy. The slaves of the first Disciple missionary, Dr. James T. Barclay, were even more important. The idea of forming a missionary society was itself a controversial matter. It was only after years of opposition to church organizations and missionary societies that the Disciples were able to move toward the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849.³¹ Following the organization of the Society, state societies were formed to develop support for the Society. In 1852, the Ohio churches held an organization meeting for this purpose. Prior to this, men in Ohio had indicated their opposition to slavery. The Address by the churches in Trumbull County has already been discussed. John Kirk had written Campbell that the men of the Western Reserve were not happy with his stand on the slavery issue.³² Other Ohioans also opposed Campbell's stand.³³ By the time of the meeting at Wooster, many knew

³⁰ Boggs, Ibid.

³¹ Noel L. Keith, The Story of D. S. Burnet: Undeserved Obscurity (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 82-116.

³² John Kirk to Alexander Campbell, Hacienda of Palestine, O(hio), December 12, 1850, in Harbinger (January 1851), 49. Henry King Shaw, Buckeye Disciples (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1952), 144-145.

³³ Ibid., 145.

that Dr. Barclay, the missionary to Jerusalem, either still owned or had sold some or all of his slaves. That this action would cause trouble was indicated in a letter from Kirk to Isaac Errett while Errett was at Warren, Ohio, prior to the meeting.

In this letter Kirk indicated that he had received information about the slaves from John Tyler, who had purchased them from Barclay at the time he left for Jerusalem. It appears that this fact was not generally known among the brotherhood. The first exchange of letters between Kirk and Tyler appears to have taken place late in 1851.³⁴ At the time that he was sent as missionary, Barclay still owned four slaves. From Kirk's letter to Errett it is learned that they had been offered their freedom if they agreed to leave Virginia, which they refused to do. They were then sold, three going to Tyler and one, because of advanced age, was placed under the care of another person at Barclay's expense. None of these slaves could read or write. Three of them were members of the Baptist church. Kirk questioned, "in the name of religion and humanity," how the brotherhood could support such a man as Barclay.³⁵

James S. Lamar, in his Memoirs of Isaac Errett, attempted to

³⁴ John Kirk to John Tyler, Youngstown, Mahoning Co., O(hio), Dec[ember] 26, 1852, in "The Barclay Slaves," Magazine (December 1855), 167-168.

³⁵ James S. Lamar, Memoirs of Isaac Errett with Selections from His Writings (Cincinnati: Standard, 1893), I, 134-135.

defend the action of Barclay on grounds that the law did not provide him with any other recourse. However, it was well known that Barclay's father-in-law, Alexander Campbell, had freed his slaves in spite of the law. Such a defense was not acceptable to the abolitionists on the Reserve.

Errett, in answering the letter, noted the legal difficulties faced in Virginia. He did not consider Barclay's ownership of slaves to be a hindrance to his preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem. Also, he thought that because the slaves elected to stay with Tyler their slavery could not be classed as involuntary.³⁶ From what was said, it appeared that the situation should have been acceptable to the anti-slavery men of the North. Preferring to serve Tyler, the slaves had refused freedom.

When the Ohio Missionary convention met on May 12, 1852, at Wooster, Errett reported that Charles Brown³⁷ delayed the business of the day by "speaking every two minutes." After the constitutional

³⁶ Ibid., 135-136.

³⁷ Charles Brown was a member of a well known abolitionist family. Charles' father, Ephraim, had been an abolitionist. His home at North Bloomfield, Trumbull County, Ohio, was known as a station on the "Underground Railroad." He was married to Julia, daughter of Leicester King, who was one time Liberty Party candidate for Ohio governor and vice-president of the United States. Julia's sister, Catherine, was the second wife of W.K. Pendleton, Campbell's successor at Bethany College. "Trailing A North Bloomfield House Once a Station on 'The Underground Railroad,' " Warren Tribune Chronicle (Monday, July 30, 1934). The Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery (Cincinnati: Western Biographical, 1883), I, 545-546. "Death of Judge L. King, of Ohio," Harbinger (December 1856), 716-717.

committee reported, a "tug of war" developed when Brown submitted a counter-report. Errett said that the "evening was spent in tedious discussion with him." ³⁸ It appears from Errett's report that Brown caused trouble the next day also.

Although Brown created problems at the first meeting over slavery, he did not completely boycott the society. He was a delegate at the third meeting. However, the churches of Trumbull County were represented at only five of the meetings between 1852 and the Civil War. ³⁹

Charles Brown, who was a close friend of John Kirk, sent Boggs copies of the correspondence between Kirk and Tyler on the Barclay slaves for the Magazine. Boggs published this correspondence in August, 1855, with a comment of his own. ⁴⁰

This correspondence is the only recorded case of an abolitionist Disciple attempting to purchase the freedom of slaves. Generally abolitionists did not feel that slaveholders should be compensated for their slaves, nor did they attempt to purchase Negroes for the purpose ⁴¹

³⁸ Lamar, op. cit., 136-137.

³⁹ See Ohio Convention of Christian Churches, Minutes, 1852-1861.

⁴⁰ John Boggs, "The Barclay Slaves," Magazine (August 1855), 167-175.

⁴¹ Neither Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York:Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964) nor Louis Filler, The Crusade against Slavery, 1830-1860 (New York:Harper and Brothers, 1960), mention abolitionists attempting to organize a campaign to buy slaves to free them.

of freeing them. This correspondence is interesting for the way it reflects the thinking of two men holding different ideas as to treatment given slaves.

The first letters between these two appear to have been exchanged sometime in the late autumn of 1851, and were published in the Intelligencer, a local newspaper in Tyler's home town of Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio. However, it was not until late in 1852 that Kirk opened negotiations for the purchase of Barclay's slaves.⁴² The purpose of this purchase was "to wipe out the blot that Bro. Barclay has brought upon the denomination."⁴³ Other information was desired by Kirk. He was interested in knowing how many slaves Barclay inherited, if there were other slaveholders in the Scottsville church, if they generally neglected the education of their slaves, and finally, if they sold their slaves as a regular thing.⁴⁴

It was not until July 9, 1853, that Tyler found time to answer Kirk. He had canvassed the slaves who consisted of a brother and sister, and their mother, to get their reactions to Kirk's proposal of buying them and moving them to Ohio. The man would be willing if his wife and family, owned by another person, could come also. The woman would be willing if her husband, owned by another, could come. Tyler was willing

⁴² John Kirk to John Tyler, op. cit., 168. ⁴³ Ibid. ⁴⁴ Ibid.

to let them go at the market price and to contribute to their liberation. Their mother was to go with the rest at no charge. In answering the other questions, Tyler gave a general answer that all who could, owned slaves, and sold them only when compelled by circumstances.⁴⁵

Kirk responded on September 16, 1853. In this letter he pressed for an answer to his question concerning the number of slaves Barclay had owned, and if the slaves of that church were taught to read. He also asked Tyler to state the lowest price that he would be willing to accept for the slaves, and the number he would have to purchase to complete the transaction. Kirk was also concerned about whether they were Christians and their denominational connection. He asked Tyler to state how much he would contribute to this project. Boggs was curious about the reason why the slaves had refused freedom earlier, and took the opportunity to say that he was "aware that slaves had advanced . . . in price, in the southern flesh mongering markets."⁴⁶

The project had been presented to many of the brotherhood in the North and met with favor. Kirk expected that the project would be supported. That this was to be a northern project does not appear to have been the impression which Tyler received. Kirk said that he was thinking of

⁴⁵ John Tyler to John Kirk, Scottsville, (Virginia), July 9, (18)53, in Boggs, op. cit., 169.

⁴⁶ Kirk to Tyler, Indianapolis, (Indiana), Sep(tember) 16, 1853, in Boggs, op. cit., 169.

requesting that Barclay be recalled and sent as a missionary to the slaves of the South.

Tyler responded in a polite way, telling Kirk that his sarcasm and the belief of the Northern Disciples on the matter were not appreciated. He thought it better if they stayed on the subject of the purchase of the slaves, toward which he was willing to contribute one hundred dollars. Tyler did not think it out of line to ask the market price for the slaves, since he would have to replace them at the market price. The owner of the woman's husband was willing to sell him, but the owner of the man's family was not then willing to part with them. The man had decided that he would go without them, hoping to redeem them later.

As to the price Barclay was paid, Tyler said he paid him the market price of the time, half down and the rest due in three years. In addition Tyler had received a piece of land which he did not want. The man was at this time worth two hundred dollars in annual hire, since he was the captain of a canal boat that Tyler owned. Tyler paid \$775 for him and then valued him at \$1300. The woman had been purchased for \$600 and was then valued at \$800. Barclay had been given \$400 for a female child, then worth \$700. The whole lot was then worth \$2800. The woman's husband could be purchased for about \$1000.

Tyler asked Kirk to raise the money by Christmas, since he would have to make arrangements for their homes for the next year at that time, and if they were to be taken to Ohio, he would need to make

arrangements for other slaves.

Tyler told Kirk that Barclay had possessed two other slaves in addition to these. One of these had died, and the other had been sold "many years ago" so that she could go with her husband. He also told Kirk that in that neighbourhood, Barclay had not disgraced the brotherhood and no master had a better reputation.⁴⁷

Kirk's next letter said that the project would be presented to the congregation at Youngstown and the minister there was to present the project to the brotherhood through The Christian Age and The Millennial Harbinger. Kirk was confident that the money could be raised. However, he felt that the aid of Campbell would be needed to gain the support of "our 'Campbellite' brethren who regard Alexander Campbell as great an oracle as they do the Apostle Paul." ⁴⁸

Although Tyler made it clear that he did not care to discuss abolitionist questions or to give information which they would use against the South, Kirk again asked him to answer the questions he had asked. In addition to the ones already asked, he added several more. He was

⁴⁷ Tyler to Kirk, Scottsville, Albemarle Co(nty), V(irginia), Oct(ober) 24, 1853, in Boggs, op. cit., 170-171.

⁴⁸ Kirk to Tyler, Marion, Marion Co(nty), O(hio), Nov(ember) 6, 1853, in Boggs, op. cit., 172. It appears that a large number of the Disciples in Ohio were from the Christian branch of the denomination led by Barton W. Stone. See James Russell Huston, "A History of the Restoration Movement in Columbia County, Ohio" (Unpublished thesis, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, 1957).

interested in what the church did with members who did not treat their slaves kindly, and he asked some direct Biblical questions, such as what Tyler thought the Bible meant by "man-stealers." And if the oppressors spoken of in the Bible were not slaveholders, what were they? ⁴⁹

In his answer Tyler indicated that he was under the impression that Kirk intended to purchase these slaves himself, and that it was not to be a project of the churches of Ohio. But if this was what Kirk wanted to do, he was willing to accept the project. So far as the Biblical questions were concerned, Tyler said that he was not a minister and could not answer theological questions. Besides, no discussion of these questions could produce any good, since they were far apart on the issues. Tyler also wanted to avoid anything which would damage the good feeling and friendship developed to that point through the correspondence. ⁵⁰

Kirk sent Tyler a one-paragraph letter thanking him for extending the terms of the agreement. He expected to get some action on the project soon. ⁵¹ This letter ended the exchange. There is no evidence that the slaves were ever brought to Ohio.

In his editorial comment, Boggs drew some conclusions which

⁴⁹ Ibid., 172-173.

⁵⁰ Tyler to Kirk, Scottsville, (Virginia), Jan(uary) 10, 1854, in Boggs, op. cit., 173-174.

⁵¹ Kirk to Tyler, Youngstown, (Ohio), Jan(uary) 26, 1854, in Boggs, op. cit., 174.

were not implied by the evidence. He saw the letters from Tyler as representing "slavery as it is." He thought that these letters indicated that what the apologists had said was not true. This was indicated in several ways.

First, the Disciples in Virginia not only owned slaves, but sold them as they did chattel. This was a partial truth. Boggs overlooked the fact that one of Barclay's slaves had been sold so that the slave's family could be united, and that the husband of the woman involved in this transaction was going to be made available for the same humanitarian reason. Tyler had also asked the slaves what they wanted to do concerning this offer.

Second, the idea that Barclay's slaves loved slavery more than freedom was not true, said Boggs, since they were not offered unconditional freedom. Boggs' claim that Negroes considered Liberia as a "sickly and uninviting place" was an over-statement.⁵² The slaves of a prominent Georgia and Kentucky Disciple, Mrs. Emily H. Tubman, were an example. Mrs. Tubman offered freedom to all her slaves who would go to Liberia. Sixty-nine took the offer and were sent at her expense. When one decided that he did not like it there, Mrs. Tubman paid his

⁵² Boggs, "The Barclay Slaves," 174.

expenses home and met him in New York.⁵³ That these slaves were not unsuccessful in their new home was seen in the fact that William Vaccanarat Shadrach Tubman, the grandson of two of them, was elected the eighteenth President of the Republic of Liberia in 1944 and was re-elected in 1952.⁵⁴

Third, "that even the kindest and most human masters" sometimes were forced to sell their slaves. Thus Boggs found evidence that,

the every relation of master and slave, therefore, holds the master responsible, not only for the continued crime of depriving his fellow men of their inalienable right, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but for all the cruelty and abuse to which they are liable under any circumstances which held in a relation which chattelizes them in the eyes of the civil law.⁵⁵

If this was the form of slavery in the mild slave state of Virginia, Boggs wondered what it must be like in the deep South where overseers were used. He was concerned about what could be said of these preachers who not only supported, but prevented exposure of, such a system in the church. He felt, however, that it would be better for the slaveholder on the day of judgement, than for the Northern apologists for slavery.⁵⁶

This exchange and its publication brought to light two things for

⁵³ Joseph Richard Bennett, "A Study of the Life and Contribution of Emily H. Tubman" (Unpublished B. D. Thesis, Christian Theological School, 1958), 44.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45. J. Edward Mosley, Disciples of Christ in Georgia (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 184.

⁵⁵ Boggs, "The Barclay Slaves," 175. ⁵⁶ Ibid.

the brotherhood at large. One was that the missionary society had attempted to keep facts about Barclay's slaves suppressed at the time of his appointment, and D. S. Burnet had given the impression that they were hired out. The other was that the reason for Barclay's desire to return home had been the negotiations between Tyler and Kirk for the sale of the slaves North.⁵⁷

In an answer to a letter from J. W. Smith of Clarence, New York, Boggs attacked the missionary society for accepting money from slaveholders and for submitting to the demands of the South in order to get money from Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri. Smith decried the power of the slave interest in controlling the church. He wanted "the friends of humanity (to) agitate!"⁵⁸

Boggs summed up his feelings about the missionary society in a public letter to the secretary of the society. Boggs objected to spending \$5,000 to send Barclay back to Jerusalem since \$500 a year would send a missionary to the states and territories of this country. Missionaries in these areas would do more good, and ten could be sent instead of one.

The matter of Barclay's selling his slaves was again brought up.

⁵⁷ John Boggs, "Remarks," Magazine (September 1857), 87-88.

⁵⁸ J. W. Smith to John Boggs, Clarence, New York, 1857, in Magazine (September 1857), 86-87.

Boggs thought that most of the Northern members of the brotherhood were favorable to missions, but not to being compelled to appear as though they believed in slavery by having to support a "man-seller" in Jerusalem. He doubted that the two dozen men on the mission board, most of whom were from the South, had the right to force on the brotherhood a slaveholder-missionary, who did not even teach his own slaves to read the Bible. The issue for Boggs was "whether by sustaining him they (the Northern Disciples) do not compromise that devotion to liberty, to equal rights, to even-handed justice and to sound morality"⁵⁹ which every Christian should sustain. Missions should be developed with an eye to economy, rather than to "worldly applause."⁶⁰

From the casual mention that Garrison and DeGroot gave the Jamaica Mission of J. O. Beardslee and that of Alexander Cross to Liberia, one might receive the impression that attempts were being made to satisfy all those involved and that this was accomplished. This was not the case completely.⁶¹

Beardslee's mission was one of importance to the abolitionists. The plan for Beardslee to return to Jamaica, where he had lived for a

⁵⁹ John Boggs, "Letters," Magazine (May 1857), 333.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 334.

⁶¹ Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred Thomas DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 332.

number of years, as a missionary for the American Christian Missionary Society. At first he had thought of a mission sponsored by the Bedford, Ohio, church and by as many others on the Reserve as could be interested in the project. Alexander Campbell, however, thought that it would be better if he went as a missionary for the whole brotherhood. He was duly appointed and made agent for the purpose of raising money for the mission. The money was to come from the non-slaveholding states.

While the money was being raised, Beardslee wrote a series of articles for The Christian Age on Jamaica. Some of these articles pertained to emancipation of the slaves there.⁶² The editor of The Christian Age refused to print these, since, if it were known that Beardslee was favorable to emancipation, it "would injure his prospects and that of the mission!"⁶³ At this point, Boggs said Beardslee saw the true position of the society and resigned his mission. Boggs indicated that in a year or two the Ohio and New York brethren would unite to support Beardslee's mission.⁶⁴ Beardslee, who was a member of the first class at Oberlin following the coming of the abolitionists and Charles G. Finney,⁶⁵ did sail

⁶² An indication of the problem facing missionaries in Jamaica at this time is found in G. A. Catherall, "Thomas Burchell, Gentle Rebel," Baptist Quarterly XXI (October, 1966), 349-363.

⁶³ John Boggs, "The Mission to Jamaica," Magazine (November 1857), 143.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 143-144.

⁶⁵ Amos Sutton Hayden, A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875), 398.

to Jamaica in January, 1858, as missionary for the American Christian Missionary Society.⁶⁶

The series of articles on Jamaica rejected by The Christian Age was published in the Magazine. Boggs published most of them in 1857, without editorial comment.

Errett replied to Boggs' comment about a union of Ohio and New York for support of Beardslee's mission. In his reply, Errett attempted to emphasize that the missionary society did not favor or oppose slavery as a society. The society did not know anything about Beardslee's reputation for abolition, and did not care about his views. Errett indicated that Beardslee had said that he did not want to be embarrassed by opposition to him because he was supported by slaveholders' money, and he was not before the society to debate the merits of the issue, but to indicate that his action was to avoid giving "occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully."⁶⁷ This statement made Boggs question whether or not Beardslee was a heartfelt abolitionist.

Errett regretted the attempt to get the label of anti-slavery pinned on the society. He did not believe that the "Evangelists" were associated with a label of either kind. Errett asserted that he was an anti-

⁶⁶ Ibid., 400.

⁶⁷ John Boggs, "The General Missionary Society," Magazine (April 1858), 331.

slavery man himself, but he was not a friend of doctrines which would divide the church, and he did not consider slavery "a sufficient reason for disturbing church fellowship." ⁶⁸ The society, he said, sent men out to preach, not slavery or anti-slavery, but the Gospel. He considered these as side issues and requested the editors not to embarrass the cause with them. ⁶⁹

Boggs criticized Errett's stand, particularly in dealing with the slavery issue. He did not think that the slavery issue could be separated from the mission, since it was the "most heinous and God-defying of all crimes" ⁷⁰ He criticized Beardslee for giving the impression to the board that he would not endorse "that public opinion in Jamaica, which would not allow him to go there as a missionary, while sustained by slaveholders' money." ⁷¹ In fact, in Boggs' mind this placed Beardslee in a different position from the one which he presented to the anti-slavery brethren in the North. If this were the case, then the Northern brethren ought not to support him. ⁷²

In response to Errett's charge that the "Evangelists" did not know pro- or anti-slavery, Boggs held "the whole spirit of the gospel was anti-slavery. Carry out the great principle of love to all men . . . and slavery would be abolished from the face of the earth." ⁷³

⁶⁸ Ibid., 312. ⁶⁹ Ibid., 313. ⁷⁰ Ibid., 313. ⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. ⁷³ Ibid., 312.

Boggs disagreed with Errett on the matter of division. He believed that if the slaveholding brethren refused to be reclaimed, then it was the duty of the rest to withdraw from them.⁷⁴ For Boggs this was not division, but removal of sinners from the church.

Missions were involved in another controversy which centered in Pardee Butler, who arrived early in 1855 in Kansas. This controversy, as will be indicated in a following chapter, did lead to division among the Disciples. Butler had been ordained at Sullivan, Ohio, a town on the Western Reserve, by A. B. Green and J. H. Jones. Although Butler was not directly in contact with slavery during his ministry on the Military Tract in Illinois, it was a question which prompted him to go to Kansas.⁷⁵ Butler's anti-slavery sentiments were presented to the general public a few months after he was "rafted" in 1855.⁷⁶

Butler wrote an article, in 1858, for the Magazine, in which he stated his position. He introduced his remarks by quoting Alexander Campbell's statement that slavery was the "largest and blackest blot upon

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Rosetta B. Hastings, Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler (Cincinnati: Standard, 1889), 319.

⁷⁶ Butler had not taken his family with him on his first trip. On his way to bring them back he expressed his views at Atchison and was placed on a two-log raft in the river. Hanging was considered too good for him. Ibid., 66-109.

our national escutcheon" and the "maximum of all evils." ⁷⁷ Butler argued that if American slavery were such an evil thing, a line of "discrimination" must be drawn between it and the servitude which existed in the early church. American slavery should be driven from the church, he thought. ⁷⁸

Going back to the Bible, Butler noted that there was no record of selling of slaves in it. The people in the Bible could buy, but not sell, slaves. When Hagar could no longer be retained by Abraham, she was freed. "The slave traffic is not then, a Christian institution." ⁷⁹ Butler was aware that the New Testament did not forbid it specifically, but neither did it,

forbid horse races, cock fights, bull fights, gladiatorial exhibitions, circus shows, dancing, tippling, lottery, gambling, card playing, not a thousand other useless, wicked and pernicious practices. ⁸⁰

Butler's controversy with the American Christian Missionary Society began in 1858, when three churches in Kansas -- Leavenworth City, Mount Pleasant, and Pardee in Atchison County -- formed a mission board and employed Butler as its missionary. ⁸¹ At about the same time he entered into negotiations with the society in an attempt to get aid from

⁷⁷ Alexander Campbell, "The Crisis," Harbinger (February 1832), 86.

⁷⁸ Pardee Butler, "Our Position to American Slavery," Magazine (April 1858), 301.

⁷⁹Ibid., 301-302. ⁸⁰ Ibid., 302. ⁸¹ Hastings, op. cit., 324.

them for the mission.⁸² In replying to the request, which was written in April, 1858, Errett thought that the board would be favorable if it could be given satisfaction on "two or three points." The board feared that if it employed Butler, his supporters would consider it an anti-slavery triumph and would use it to rally the Northern brethren for support on anti-slavery grounds. Because of this possibility and its probably causing a break between North and South, the missionaries were to avoid utterances which The North-Western Christian Magazine could use to add fuel to the fire of this controversy. In the mission work Butler was to know neither slavery nor anti-slavery.⁸³

Butler resented the idea of a "gag" being placed in his mouth. He responded by saying that,

This reformation is pledged before heaven and earth, and under covenants the most solemn and binding into which men can enter, to guarantee freedom of thought and speech to our brotherhood--not indeed on subjects purely abstract, speculative and inoperative, but on Bible questions--questions which involve the well-being of humanity. This matter of slavery is a Bible question--a question of justice between man and man--of mercy and humanity. It is what Jesus would call one of the weightier matters of the law, and demands therefore, a large place in our investigations.⁸⁴

Errett objected to the discussion of slavery because the form the question took in Kansas did not concern the relation of master to slaves and their duties to each other according to the Bible, but "whether

⁸² Lamar, op. cit., I, 215.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Hastings, op. cit., 321.

the slaveholder is necessarily a sinner." ⁸⁵

In his last letter to the mission board, Butler took up the issue of the "forms" of the abolition question in Kansas. He was of the opinion that the "forms" were really to be found in Cincinnati, not Kansas. In Kansas they had not debated the matter of taking slaveholders into membership. No one in Kansas had organized a church which excluded slaveholders. They had been members of the churches in Kansas from the beginning and still were. ⁸⁶

As long as the gag stood, Butler would not become associated with the mission board. The Kansas brethren had allowed him freedom of expression, and "would not make this 'Reformation' . . . a withered and blasted trunk, scattered by the lightening of heaven. . . ." ⁸⁷

While touring the free states, Butler wrote an open letter to Benjamin Franklin and Isaac Errett, which was published in The Christian Luminary. This letter was in response to an article Franklin had published in The American Christian Review. In order that the public could see both sides, Butler made his reply.

He had been charged with dividing the church. But, he pointed out, this was a charge against the reformers of the past, of the Baptist against Alexander Campbell. Any point which is discussed in Christianity

⁸⁵ Lamar, op. cit., 216. ⁸⁶ Hastings, op. cit., 323.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 321.

causes division. He reminded Franklin that he had created schism in the Baptist church by his doctrine of the Holy Spirit and Baptism for the remission of sin. Butler admitted he had caused schism by protesting the selling of men. But "who commits the greater wrong?" he asked. Union of the church could become the "parent of corruption, for it hides error from exposure, and hinders the spread of the truth by preventing its investigation," ⁸⁸ if union was based on non-discussion.

Apparently he had been called "a man of one idea" and against this he protested. He had only one idea, "the peerless glory of the man Christ Jesus . . .," ⁸⁹ but this was not what was being referred to by his critics.

As to the directive from Errett to "preach the gospel and avoid the side issues," ⁹⁰ he raised the question: what was the gospel? He found it in the command to love the neighbour as oneself. If this were the Gospel, how was slavery in harmony with it? If the avoidance of side issues were applied, then preaching against intemperance and dancing would have to stop.

He reminded the reader that the servant was to be treated "just and equal" and the only way this could be done was by the "Golden Rule."

⁸⁸ Pardee Butler, "Reply of Elder Pardee Butler," Christian Luminary (June 2, 1859).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

This the slaveholders refused to follow.

Butler told Franklin that he refused to face the issue openly because he had no defense. People without defense dodge and become noncommittal on the issue.

He quoted Errett who accused him of being "sore" on the slavery issue. Butler said that, "I do plead guilty to the charge that I felt 'sore'. I have had more than Missouri River rafts, and tar and feathers inflicted by Border Ruffians, to make me 'sore,' since I began to be hunted for my life like a wolf over the Kansas prairies." ⁹¹ But he was never a member of a church which proposed disfellowship with slaveholders.

He closed the letter by denying that he toured the Northern states opposing the missionary society. Nor was he an injured man, meaning his pride or feelings. As long as God took care of him he could not be injured.

Butler's tour of the free states was to seek aid for his Kansas mission, and this naturally led to some resentment on the part of the missionary society. During his tour, Butler was received in all but one church, that at Bedford, Ohio, ⁹² which had been involved in the discussion over Beardslee. Butler's rejection of and by the American Christian Missionary Society led the abolitionists of the North to unite for his support, by forming a separate mission society. The details of this

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Hastings, op. cit., 326.

action will be discussed in a following chapter.

By 1859 the arguments of the abolitionists had become stereotyped. This discussion indicates that no unity of views existed or could exist between the abolitionists and the non-abolitionists. The discussion of John I. Rogers shows that the two sides were placing emphasis on different things and were refusing to come to grips with the real issue --was slavery compatible with the spirit of the Gospel. In the early days of the discussion, and in the discussion centering on the Bible, the issue was clearer than when it became involved in the economic and political areas. But even then the literal interpretation used by the anti-abolitionists did not allow for consideration of the spirit of the Gospel to be considered. The problem which arose over Butler involved this failure to recognize, on the part of the mission board, in this case, that for the abolitionists the spirit of the Gospel made slavery a sin. Why this is the case is not clear, since these same people held that dancing, gambling, drinking, horse racing, and a list of other things of this kind were considered sin and were preached against. None of these was listed specifically in the Bible as sin, and all were forced to rely on the spirit of the Gospel for their condemnation. This fact was pointed out more than once by the abolitionists. Because of this situation, those who had pointed out already that unity of the church was only on the surface, and that division had occurred within, were right. By 1859 very little fellowship of a genuine and sincere nature seems to have existed between the slaveholders

and their supporters, and the abolitionists. This is indicated by the attitudes expressed on both sides in the discussions of Rogers, Beardslee, and Butler. It is also expressed in the discussion of the controversy between Bethany College and North-Western Christian University over the discussion of slavery by college students.

CHAPTER XIII

ABOLITION AND THE COLLEGES

Not all the controversies centered around preachers, missions, missionaries, or the question of whether slavery was a sin. Abolitionism played an important part in education. An extremely bitter controversy developed between North-Western Christian University, now Butler University at Indianapolis, Indiana, and Bethany College, founded by Alexander Campbell at Bethany, Virginia. These colleges had been involved in the slavery controversy for sometime before an open exchange took place between them.

F. M. Green, historian of Hiram College, suggested that one of the motivating factors in the founding of Hiram was Bethany's being located "on the slavery side of the Ohio." ¹ On leaving Hiram, James A. Garfield decided to further his education at Williams College, rather than Bethany, as he found Bethany too pro-slavery in its views. ²

From the beginning of North-Western Christian University Alexander Campbell had expressed contempt for it. His response to

¹ Francis Marion Green, Hiram College and Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (Cleveland: O. S. Hubbell, 1901), 3-4.

² Theodore Clark Smith, The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), I, 65.

Ovid Butler's letter informing him that a charter had been received, indicated that relations between Campbell and the new college would probably not be the best. He took offense at the use of the term "North Western" in the school's name. Since literature and science were not Northern or Southern, there was no need to give an institution such a designation, Campbell thought.

What Campbell said may be true, but Butler was also right when he pointed out that the South claimed the "principle" attention of our leading brethren.³ Butler recognized that the major support for Bethany came from the South and that the reason for this was Bethany's location in the South. He also thought that the Northern brethren would support an institution liberally if it were located "amongst them." He pointed out to Campbell that no college existed in that area of the country, and that the social, moral, and religious well-being of the people required one.

From Campbell's remarks, it appears that he used the title of "North Western" only as a pretext to condemn the whole project. Had the title been the only defect in the idea, it would have been indicated in less than seven pages of the Harbinger.⁴ Campbell was opposed to

³ Alexander Campbell, "The North-Western Christian University," Harbinger (June 1850), 330.

⁴ Ibid., 329-335.

the sectional nature of the college, which he inferred from the fact that the founders of the new college were among some of the leading abolitionists of the denomination; but this was not all of the problem. At this same time the organization of some of the cooperative ventures of the brotherhood was taking place, and with these Campbell was not in full agreement. The Tract and Publication Societies had just been formed, and he was concerned that these might compete with his publishing ventures. He had refused to attend the organization meeting, and asserted that he would take the presidency of the Missionary Society only if the other two were dissolved.⁵ It would seem that part of Campbell's opposition to the new college was fear of competition for support of Bethany. This view is supported in an article by Campbell in the Harbinger, in which he defended his remarks on the new college, by discussing the problems of building up a good college and of obtaining good men as teachers.⁶ From 1850 to 1861 tension continued. Most of the problems related to slavery.

Another conflict between North-Western Christian University and Alexander Campbell developed after Campbell's tour of Illinois in

⁵ Noel L. Keith, The Story of D. S. Burnet: Undeserved Obscurity (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 115. The whole of chapter III of Keith's book deals with the problem of getting Campbell to agree to unified work.

⁶ Campbell, op. cit., (September 1850), 456-457.

the fall of 1853. In his report on the trip, Campbell commented that John O'Kane, the agent for North-Western Christian University, was suggesting that people living in free-soil areas should not support schools in slave states. Campbell indicated that he thought O'Kane was purposely preceding him as he made his tour. Campbell also asserted that O'Kane was to act as agent, in agreement with the board of North-Western Christian University, in raising funds for the endowment of a chair at Bethany College.⁷ This last point became a major issue.

When the board wrote to O'Kane about the matter, he replied that he had not based support on free-soilism or claimed any exclusive area for patronage. He did not deny that he did suggest that one of the features of the University was its location in a free state where students would not come into contact with slavery. The board then passed five resolutions concerning the issue. First, that they "repudiated the issue that Christians living on free-soil should not cooperate with Christians living on slave soil" Second, that the University was pledged by its charter to the Bible and not sectarian policy. It would not, however, reject aid or doctrine because of party rejection elsewhere. Third, they did not claim exclusive patronage on any grounds. Fourth, that the board never promised Campbell that O'Kane would urge, while soliciting

⁷ Alexander Campbell, "Notes of a Tour to Illinois--No. III," Harbinger (January 1854), 41-42.

for the University itself, funds for the endowment of a chair at Bethany, and they had not heard of this before. Fifth, that these resolutions were to be sent to the editors of The Millennial Harbinger, The Christian Record and The Christian Age.⁸ Publication in these periodicals would have given the issue almost universal coverage in the brotherhood.

The big issue was over the matter of whether or not the board had in fact commissioned O'Kane to act as agent for the chair Indiana was to endow at Bethany. H. St. John Van Dake made it clear in his reply, that the University's board had not authorized any such relationship between O'Kane and Bethany. He suggested that possibly the commissioners of the University might have done so, but not the board. But Van Dake denied also that the commissioners as a group ever took such action. What they as individuals may have done, he could not say.⁹

The editor of The Christian Record recognized that Van Dake's language was strong, but since the issue had come before the public, the editor thought he should present the views of one of the members of the board of the University.¹⁰

⁸ John T. Cox in an open letter in Christian Record (July 1854), 210-211; also Harbinger (August 1854), 465-466.

⁹ James Mathes, "N. W. C. University," Christian Record (September 1854), 279-280.

¹⁰ Ibid.

A letter from Ovid Butler in the same issue of The Christian Record sheds some light on what happened, and indicates that Van Dake was not telling all that he knew. While Campbell was visiting in Indiana, Butler entertained him, along with some of the men interested in the University. A discussion took place which probably gave Campbell the impression he received about O'Kane's solicitation of funds for Bethany College.¹¹ Henry K. Shaw suggests what probably occurred at the meeting at Butler's home, and this offers the most plausible analysis of the situation. By the time of the meeting all knew that Campbell did not think well of the idea of a new university. Campbell apparently pressed his plea for Bethany, and since it was felt that Campbell's support was needed,

an off-the-record policy decision was inevitable . . . It was deemed necessary for Indiana to support Campbell's project, the endowment of a chair of ancient languages at Bethany College.¹²

Campbell, it appears, was then told that O'Kane would add the Bethany project to his duties. Shaw concludes that the decision was one of appeasement and completely unofficial. Campbell considered it otherwise.¹³

¹¹ Ovid Butler to James Mathes, Forest Home, (Indiana), Aug(ust) 15, 1854, in Christian Record (September 1854), 281-282.

¹² Henry King Shaw, Hoosier Disciples (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1966), 145.

¹³ Ibid.

The controversy lasted until the end of the year.¹⁴

One of the most bitter controversies which raged between the two schools was over the issue of abolition and slavery. This controversy started in January, 1856, about two years after the dispute on O'Kane's representing Bethany in Indiana.

One is not surprised that tension existed between the students from the North and the South at Bethany College. This tension broke into open hostility following a speech given by a student identified only by the name Allen, on November 11, 1855, entitled "Abolitionism and Negro Stealing."¹⁵

This attack on the North was answered by Phillip Burns, a Canadian, in a sermon at the Bethany church. The groundwork had been laid prior to this attack on slavery. Harvey W. Everest of Ohio, and later professor at Hiram College, had on October 12, in an address entitled "Right of Christians to Engage in War," asserted that "the arguments from the Bible to sustain war, polygamy and slavery, belong to the same category."¹⁶ The next Sunday, A. B. Way, also of Ohio, stated

¹⁴ See Christian Record (July 1854), 210-211; (September 1854), 279-282; (November 1854), 327-331; Harbinger (January 1854), 41-42; (August 1854), 465-469; (October 1854), 583-589; (December 1854), 693-695.

¹⁵ Robert O. Fife, "Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in the Slavery Controversy" (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1960), 214.

¹⁶ Ibid.

in a sermon that Satan and his emissaries misquoted the "Scripture to sustain intemperance, spiritualism and slavery." ¹⁷ This expression elicited threats from the Southern students. Campbell considered such action a desecration of the house of God and the Lord's Day. Campbell's taking offense at the inclusion of slavery with other evils when he considered it the "maximum of all evils" does not seem consistent. Campbell appears to have been motivated by interest in the support he was receiving from the South for Bethany. He also was suffering from senility. ¹⁸

Campbell believed the rumor that these students had planned to come to Bethany for the purpose of introducing abolitionism, but he denied any truth in the statements which the students themselves made to the press, although he was not present at the time the events occurred. ¹⁹

Campbell was angered at the acceptance of these students at North-Western Christian University after they had left Bethany College, but he was more angered over the publicity the incident was given. In an article dealing with the matter, he pointed out that the incident had

¹⁷ Alexander Campbell, "Reported Troubles in Bethany College," Harbinger (February 1856), 112.

¹⁸ Robert Richardson mentioned several times to P. F. Fall that old age was affecting Campbell's mind. Robert Richardson to P. F. Fall, July 30, 1857; December 15, 1858; June 24, 1859; December 19, 1859, in the P. F. Fall Memorial Library, Frankfort, Kentucky.

¹⁹ Campbell, "Reported Troubles in Bethany College."

been reported in the Glasgow, Scotland, Christian News and the Glasgow News, as well as in the Indiana State Journal, which was owned by Ovid Butler, the New York Tribune and the Louisville Journal.²⁰

The major part of the controversy was with the University over its admittance of these men as students. Campbell hoped that the Indianapolis university would not set a precedent "of receiving into her bosom, and cherishing in her affection, those dismissed for immoral and unchristian (sic) conduct"²¹ from other colleges and universities. The issue was whether it was immoral and unchristian to include slavery in a list of evils or to assert that slavery was not supported by the Bible. Campbell held that such action was immoral and unchristian, whereas North-Western Christian University held it was not.

There is no question that the Southern students caused a disturbance during Burns' sermon. Campbell stated that some walked out during the meeting. One opened a window from the outside, allowing it to fall, breaking the glass. Others were reported to have thrown rocks against the sides of the church.²² Although Campbell attempted to minimize and consider as idle talk the threats of ducking Burns in the creek, he does admit, however, that such threats were made.²³

This was not the only threat reported. The Weekly State Journal of Indianapolis reported that a number of Southern students resolved

²⁰ Ibid., 111. ²¹ Ibid., 113. ²² Ibid., 115. ²³ Ibid.

in a meeting to request Burns "for his own personal good and for the good of the College, to keep his alien and sedition views locked within his own bosom." ²⁴

A reply to Campbell's charge that North-Western Christian University had been discourteous to Bethany College in accepting these men as students was made by Ovid Butler. Butler noted that Campbell had from the beginning of the University not "favorably regarded" it. For this reason, he did not think that the charge against the University should come as a surprise. He thought that it would have been better to have carried on the discussion in private rather than in the public press, but since the public press had been chosen, the University found it necessary to defend its action through it.

Butler summarized the charges which Campbell made against the University. The first was the lack of courtesy toward Bethany. This charge rested on the fact that some young men withdrew from Bethany in November, 1855, having become dissatisfied, and some of these men had been received at the University. At the time of their enrollment it was stated that they had withdrawn voluntarily and "that no charge of immoral or unchristian conduct was pending against them." ²⁵ Their reasons for

²⁴ Fife, op. cit., 216.

²⁵ Ovid Butler, "N. W. C. University," Christian Record (March 1856), 65.

withdrawal were acceptable. Butler felt that if courtesy to Bethany and Campbell were incompatible with justice, then justice must take precedence over courtesy.

During the discussion at Bethany some twenty students²⁶ "demanded the right to discuss the merits of American slavery in public debate, and also in the pulpit, amenable to the rules of true morality and the laws of the land." ²⁷ However, the faculty required that further discussion of slavery take place.²⁸ Butler noted that should Bethany "decree that freedom of speech, the rights of conscience, or any other natural right might be justly invaded, our acquiescence could scarcely be expected" ²⁹

The University was also charged with breaking "down college government and . . . jeopardiz(ing) the good of society" ³⁰ by its course of action. Butler acknowledged that some differences existed between the University and Bethany College on college government.

The University was charged further with "knowingly and willingly" taking in men dismissed for immoral, and unchristian activity. Butler

²⁶ Fife, op. cit., 215.

²⁷ Campbell, "Reported Troubles in Bethany College," 114.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Butler, "N. W. C. University," 66.

³⁰ Ibid.

noted that the University had not been notified of charges until they appeared in the public press. The men at the time of their acceptance did not know that they had been dismissed from Bethany. Also, the University did not believe that Bethany would dismiss men for taking part in a discussion in which both sides of the issue were presented before the faculty without any expression of disapprobation by the faculty.³¹

As to their immorality, Butler noted that some of these men were well known in Indiana to be most upright and were of good Christian character before they went to Bethany; thus, if they were corrupt, the corruption took place at Bethany. He wanted specific charges and evidence of immorality.³² The response by the Bethany faculty gave no specific charges or evidence.³³

Although Butler sent a copy of this to Campbell to be printed in The Millennial Harbinger, Campbell refused to print it. He also refused to print a statement by the faculty of Hiram College which supported the University. H. St. John Van Dake, whose caustic pen has been noted above, pointed out this refusal and reminded Campbell that this was against his avowed promise to print both sides of an issue. Since Christian Baptist days, Van Dake had found no room for complaint on

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. , 66-67.

³³ "College Etiquette and the Faculty of the N. W. Christian University," Harbinger (April 1856), 226-229; "College Etiquette," Christian Record (May 1856), 133-135.

this score, but now he thought he had one.³⁴

It is interesting to note that although Campbell stated that the whole issue was started by Allen, who made a pro-slavery speech, nothing more was said about him, nor was there any indication that the faculty disciplined him for speaking on a political issue.³⁵

Before the Civil War, one final exchange on slavery took place between the two schools. In the discussion of the progress of the schools and colleges of the brotherhood in the December, 1859, Harbinger, the University was referred to in an uncomplimentary way. The article said,

There is, too, at Indianapolis, a Northwestern (sic) Christian University, but we fear it is too much tinctured with the fanatical sectarianism of political-religious abolitionism to be of any service to the Christian church or cause.³⁶

This statement was probably motivated by the recent organization of the American Christian Missionary Society, many of whose members were members of the board or faculty of the University.³⁷ Jeremiah Smith, a supporter of the University, was quick to point out to W. K. Pendleton,

³⁴ H. St. John Van Dake, "Bethany College and the N. W. C. University," Christian Record (May 1856), 149.

³⁵ Butler's statement for the faculty of the University was marred by a reference to Campbell's age. Butler, "N. W. C. University," 67.

³⁶ W. K. Pendleton, "Our Progress and Prospects," Harbinger (December 1859), 713.

³⁷ W. J. Pendleton to Jer(emiah) Smith, Bethany, V(irginia), December 21, 1859, in Harbinger (January 1860), 51.

who wrote the article, that the same wording could be used against Bethany College by changing the word abolition to fire-eater.³⁸ This exchange was unimportant and minor, but indicated that those divided on the abolition-slavery issue were quick to pick at even minor points.

The organization of the new Christian Missionary Society was not a minor issue. The controversy between Pardee Butler and the American Christian Missionary Society and its failure to support him without a "gag" has been discussed. This action by the American Christian Missionary Society unified the abolitionists around Butler and caused the formation of a separate missionary society, the Christian Missionary Society. No doubt all the controversies discussed above contributed to the move in this direction. It was this action which united the abolitionist Disciples, and as will be seen, separated them from the missionary activities of the brotherhood. The missionary society was the major brotherhood activity which drew the Disciples together and gave them denominational unity.

³⁸ Jer(emiah) Smith to W.K. Pendelton, Winchester, Ind(iana), December 9, 1859, in Harbinger (January 1860), 50.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DISCIPLES DIVIDE:

THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

We have seen the controversy which developed after the appointment of Dr. Barclay, a slaveholder, as missionary to Jerusalem; the problem over the appointment of Beardslee to Jamaica; and the refusal of the American Christian Missionary Society to support Pardee Butler in Kansas without curbing his freedom of speech; these have already been discussed.¹ Since abolitionists were not prone to be silent about things they did not approve, or to compromise with slavery, one need not be surprised at the action taken by the abolitionist Disciples to resolve their problems concerning missions and slavery by forming their own missionary society.

The organization meeting of the Ohio Missionary Society indicated there were strong feelings on the matter of Northern support for a slaveholder in Palestine.² John Kirk and Charles Brown, among the more vocal in Ohio, had their counterparts in other states. With the passing of time, abolitionism had permeated the Disciples as well as other religious organizations, and what was needed by the Disciple abolitionists was some issue around which they could rally their interest on a

¹ See Chapter XII above. ² Ibid.

grand scale. That issue was the refusal of the American Christian Missionary Society to support Pardee Butler as a missionary in Kansas because he would not stop his abolitionist activities. The American Christian Missionary Society's board held that such activities were not a part of the Christian faith, while Butler and his supporters held that such activity was central in the Christian faith. The board did not hold slavery a sin, while the abolitionist held that it was. These two points of view, like political issues which developed during the same period over the same subject, were so far apart that no compromise was possible. One side would have to give up its convictions, or principles, and since both considered they were right, this was impossible.

Eileen G. Vandergrift is of the opinion that the conflict was not between the extremes, the slaveholders and the abolitionists; but between the abolitionists and the moderates.³ This seems to have been the case in most of the controversies among the Disciples centering around slavery.

Although Beardslee and his relationship with the board of the American Christian Missionary Society had raised the ire of the abolitionists, the Pardee Butler case was more than they could bear.

Butler had been born in New York state, and reared on the

³ Eileen Gordan Vandergrift, "The Christian Missionary Society: A Study in the Influence of Slavery on the Disciples of Christ"(Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Butler University, Indianapolis, 1845), 14-15.

Western Reserve of Ohio. He had become a Disciple through the preaching of Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell. He was motivated by his love for freedom to move to Kansas in 1855, so that he could aid in making it a free state.⁴ It has already been noted that he refused to be silenced by the American Christian Missionary Society on the matter of slavery and that the society refused to support him.⁵ Butler, in speaking of the matter, pointed out that the slaveholders in Kansas did not require such a pledge from him; therefore, he did not see why the general denominational society should do so.⁶

Following this refusal of aid, Butler went on a tour of the Old Northwest, apparently at the request of the newly formed Kansas society. This tour lasted from the middle of December, 1858, to the middle of May, 1859. During this time he collected \$225.00 above his expenses for the mission.⁷

At this time he suggested that a convention be held of those who regarded slavery as a moral evil, and that a missionary fund for the support of those who held slavery was an evil be raised. He also suggested that support for The Christian Luminary be increased.⁸ This seems to have been the first public call for Disciple abolitionists to unite

⁴ Ibid., 23; Rosetta B. Hastings, Personal Recollections of Pardee Butler (Cincinnati: Standard, 1889), 319.

⁵ Vandergrift, op. cit., 26. ⁶Ibid., 27. ⁷ Ibid., 27-28. ⁸ Ibid., 28.

for any purpose.

It appears that John Boggs and Ovid Butler prepared and sent out circulars calling for a convention to meet November 1, 1859, at Indianapolis. The number of circulars sent is unknown, but at least eight hundred responses were returned, indicating something of the interest in abolition on the part of the Disciples.⁹ Where the list used came from is not stated, but from the fact that Boggs was involved, one can conclude that the mailing list of The Christian Luminary probably provided most of the names.

On the appointed day the convention was called to order. With the preliminary business of organization taken care of, those present heard Jonas Hartzel deliver an address on the meaning of the meeting. Hartzel reviewed the whole problem which led to the calling of the convention, and openly stated that division had taken place over slavery among the Disciples.¹⁰

Hartzel took as his text I Corinthians 11:19 : "For there must be also heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you . . ." He pointed out that divisions in the church were a necessary evil.

⁹ Ibid. , 32, 34.

¹⁰ Jonas Hartzel, "Address," Christian Luminary (November 17, 1859), 129.

. . . Schism served as a separating, sifting process; bringing to light conflicting theories, and their corresponding practice, putting that which was false to shame and glorifying that which was true.¹¹

The causes of religious divisions had been many; lack of education and knowledge, pride of position, self interest, corrupt hearts, but "last, and greatest, many unregenerated preachers, and church members. . . ."¹²

Hartzel told his audience that it would be good if religious differences could be settled without compromising God, or His teachings, but history indicated this was not possible. "All the parties in church strife do not possess the same degree of enlightenment, on the subject of debate. They have not all enjoyed the same reading and conversational opportunities." ¹³ Some were too close to the problem to see it.

The primary object of the convention was the consideration of "the propriety of organizing a North-western Christian Missionary Society;" ¹⁴ and for providing better support for The Christian Luminary. He hoped that the matters would be discussed "in the spirit of christian meekness, and brotherly purity" ¹⁵

Among the questions he anticipated was this: could the American Christian Missionary Society care for this need? He answered, for those present, that it could not. His reason was that it attempted to bring into union two opposing forces, freedom and slavery. The gulf between them

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

was impassable. "Any society that gives place and recognition to these antagonisms has in its own bosom all the elements of disunion." ¹⁶ This was seen, Hartzel thought, in the fact that the American Christian Missionary Society's board had no sooner appointed Barclay, than the question of his relationship with slavery had been raised. It was found that he was a slaveholder and seller who had not taught his slaves to read. Hartzel noted that some of the churches would not admit such a man to membership without "reparation."

The appointment of a slaveholder was a liability and "had its origin, in the vain attempt to bring into wedlock elements that had no affinity, . . . parties that could not live in peace, but would have to be divorced sooner or later." ¹⁷ This problem could have been avoided had the society chosen only missionaries free of slavery. But he went on to say, slavery and freedom never had been entitled to the same degree of consideration. "Freedom has its origin in God, but slavery in local municipal law . . ." ¹⁸ "All Christians can unite on freedom, but all cannot unite on slavery." "We find the origin of our present division" in the missionary society's choosing a slaveholder as its missionary. "In this we have the elements of schism." ¹⁹

Since the sending of a slaveholder as a missionary had identified the brotherhood with slavery, two alternatives faced those opposed to

¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ Ibid. ¹⁸ Ibid. ¹⁹ Ibid.

slavery. They could remain identified with a missionary society which was pro-slavery, "and become responsible to God and man for this endorsement." ²⁰ Or they could leave this association to others. If they chose the latter, then there was propriety in considering the organization of a new society.

In discussing the American Christian Missionary Society further, Hartzel noted that its funds could not be applied to the support of all missions. He reminded the audience that money used to support Beardslee had to come only from the North. From this Hartzel concluded that,

The American Christian Missionary Society has, with all its love of union, created a division in the brotherhood, and made a Church North, and a Church South. We would be glad to entertain any reasonable overtures for the healing of this division. ²¹

Since "the proceeds of slavery" caused the division, Hartzel felt that they should look at several causes. One of these had been the selling of men for a profit. Many Christians felt that such was not Christian and had scruples against using funds from such sources. Another cause was the suppression of discussion on the subject. Any attempt to silence discussion of Baptism or communion would be considered "schism." Slavery was just as important as these two.

. . . It was freely discussed among us for a time, and the discussion had not at any time wholly ceased. It was never, by any representative body, or by any general convention of our brethren, declared to

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

be an illegitimate subject, for any church member, elder, or evangelist, at any time or place, to speak of, pro or con, as his own views of duty and propriety might dictate.

The first official injunction imposed, was by the American Christian Missionary Society. ²²

At no time had the brethren given the society power to make such directives. Since they had taken this upon themselves, they were "schismatical." This society told the brethren in Kansas that "the question of slavery and anti-slavery must be ignored"²³ and the following of this prescription was a condition of support. The society had thereby "overstepped its jurisdiction, and assumed authority never delegated to it." ²⁴ Hartzel repeated that such action was "schismatical."

Hartzel told the assembled brethren that they must consider, before they took action, if this was a matter of "Christian 'forbearance.' " There were things which came under this head, and if this was one of them, then their obligation was clear. He examined some examples of things which were of this class, and found that since slavery was a moral issue, it was not one of them. All moral questions had to be submitted to Christ. The question was: "What are those duties which Christianity enjoins?" It demanded more than just food and clothing; it required the rendering of what was "just and equal." And this meant that "the master must give his slaves freedom." ²⁵

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

Hartzel reminded his hearers that the right of speech and thought were among the most important of all liberties. The suppression of discussion of any real or imaginary evil was tyranny or a sign of weakness. If slaveholding in the Bible was too weak to stand discussion and examination, this weakness should be pointed out. If it were strong, it would have nothing to fear from open and free discussion.

Going back to the foundations of the brotherhood, Hartzel reminded them that they had only primitive Christianity as an authority. They had reformed the faith in many areas, but they had not returned to the primitive faith when it came to slavery. They were,

suppressing all discussion of the subject in the free portion of the church, and defending it in the slaveholding districts, as a most Christian institution, while one editor, a few preachers, churches and church members were opposed to it . . .²⁶

He noted that many churches had stopped fellowship with slaveholders who refused to reform and who brought shame on the name of Christ by continuing as they were before they took His name. The American Christian Missionary Society had given its influence to these people and had "Christianized that which (was) anti-christian; (had) generalized that which (was) sectional, (had) required freedom to place slavery upon full equality with itself" ²⁷

As a final point in the speech, Hartzel brought to the attention of the convention the matter of a press through which their views could

²⁶ Ibid., 130. ²⁷ Ibid.

be made known. He called for better support of The Christian Luminary. Freedom for the discussion of this issue had been limited to The North-Western Christian Magazine and The Christian Luminary. Before these periodicals came into being, the press of the brotherhood was either pro-slavery or silent on the issue. He noted that the position held by The Christian Luminary must of necessity move toward division, or conversion.

He felt that The Christian Luminary was necessary to aid in removing the pro-slavery cast which had been placed over the movement by others. The association of the brotherhood with slavery had been caused by a series of articles, "Our Position to American Slavery," in The Millennial Harbinger, in 1845. This same periodical defended the Fugitive Slave Law. The general popularity of the editor of that magazine "could not fail to fix their reputation upon the body." ²⁸ He noted that the only answer to Campbell's stand on the Fugitive Slave Bill was Isaac Errett's sermon on "Civil Government" and it had not received much notice.

Finally he noted that they needed to sustain the magazine so that they might "bring our brethren to a more enlightened scriptural conscience upon this subject . . .," ²⁹ and remove the "odium" which rested upon the fellowship.

²⁸ Ibid. See above pp 61ff, 99ff. ²⁹ Hartzel, op. cit.

The convention organized The Christian Missionary Society. Its membership was limited to those who,

1. (Had) membership in good standing in some Christian Congregation.
2. (Had) no complicity in the crime of American Slavery.
3. (Made) payment of an annual contribution to the funds of the Society.³⁰

This statement on slavery in the membership article of the constitution was the only statement about slavery.

It has been noted by Vandergrift, that there was a close relationship between the promoters of North-Western Christian University and the Christian Missionary Society. The sponsors and officers of both organizations were, in many cases, the same people.³¹

As the Civil War came on, many saw that the purpose of the Christian Missionary Society had been served, and they wanted to see a reunion of the brotherhood, at least in the North. An attempt to get a resolution supporting the government in the war was ruled out of order at the meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1861.³² There was hope that the meeting in 1862 would take action, but the Christian Missionary Society did not publicize its meeting which was to follow

³⁰ "Proceedings of the Christian Convention," Christian Luminary (November 17, 1859), 130.

³¹ Vandergrift, op. cit., 60-61.

³² Noel L. Keith, The Story of D. S. Burnet: Undeserved Obscurity (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 161.

that of the older society. Failure to pass the resolution came as a disappointment and the Christian Missionary Society's meeting was postponed until January.³³ The 1863 meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society finally passed the desired resolution.³⁴ By this time the "Emancipation Proclamation" had eliminated the cause of the division and the Christian Missionary Society died by default.³⁵

With the demise of the Christian Missionary Society and the end of slavery, this controversy among the Disciples came to an end. The division was not as serious as that among the Baptist and Methodist churches. The division was healed without difficulty. There is, however, evidence that from this period, and related to this controversy, another division developed which in time led to permanent division in the brotherhood.³⁶

³³ Vandergrift, op. cit., 75. ³⁴ Keith, op. cit., 168.

³⁵ Vandergrift, op. cit., 76.

³⁶ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., Quest for a Christian America, (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 135-138.

CHAPTER XV

THE DISCIPLE ABOLITIONISTS: A FINAL LOOK

At the beginning of this study, it was stated that the purpose was to examine the abolitionist Disciples in terms of their thinking, the extent of their controversy, their influence, and to determine whether or not division over the issue did occur.

The Disciples reflected the attitude of the general population in any given area where they were found. In Kentucky they favored the colonization idea as the best method of handling slavery. Those on the Western Reserve of Ohio were generally abolitionist. Disciples in other areas reflected the feeling of that area. Alexander Campbell's attitude was not much different from others who lived in Western Pennsylvania and the Northern Panhandle of what is now West Virginia.

The ideas held by Campbell were quite typical of the general attitude of those in non-slaveholding sections. Most opposed slavery but did not want to interfere in the South, or saw colonization as the answer. Most people in the North did not want Negroes moving into their section of the country. Campbell was motivated in his thinking on the matter by his interpretation of what the Bible had to say on the issue. Since he believed that Christians, as such, could be concerned only with that which was specifically stated in the Bible, and were not allowed

to add to or take from, he did not believe that Christians could oppose slavery, as he did not find it specifically pointed out in the Bible as being a sin. The Bible, he believed, regulated the master-slave relationship, but did not condemn it. This interpretation supported the general view of the area where he lived as well as the most commonly held view in the North. Campbell's opposition to slavery was based on economics.

The abolitionists thought differently on the matter. They supported their views by the Bible also. Disciple abolitionists believed, as did Campbell, the principle that Christians, as such, could act only in areas where the Bible made specific indications that such an act was Christian or not. They could not take from or add to the Bible's teachings. However, within this principle they found that slavery was condemned as sin. Thus both sides in the controversy were working from the same principle, but arrived at opposing views. Because of this method of arriving at their views, neither side could give up its beliefs without giving up its theological position. Many recognized that because of the differences in Biblical interpretation, division had occurred long before the organization of the Christian Missionary Society.

In the early days, the controversy was limited in extent. Most were agreed that slavery should be ended. But following the rise of militant abolition in the 1830's, the controversy grew greater in intensity and in the number involved. The "Address" by the Trumbull County churches

in the 1840's indicates something of the size of the movement. These churches represented the stronghold of the Disciples in Ohio. By 1854 there were enough abolitionists to support a periodical devoted to their cause. At the same time at least two colleges were being developed, part of the motivation for which came from the need for colleges in non-slaveholding areas. Hiram College was located on the Western Reserve in the heart of abolition activity in Ohio, and North-Western Christian University had as members of its board and as its major supporters the prominent abolitionists.

The discussion of Beardslee pointed out that abolitionists were thinking of developing their own missionary society. Even earlier they were questioning the propriety of supporting a slaveholder as missionary, an action questioned by Charles Brown in 1851. Beardslee's problem was resolved by supporting him only with money raised in the North. When Pardee Butler sought aid, the situation changed. He was refused aid without a gag, and this consolidated abolition feelings.

The influence of the abolitionists is hard to measure. There are indications that many churches voted disfellowship with slaveholders over the years. Their influence was strong enough to support the Magazine and The Christian Luminary. One can say safely that although not dominant, the influence of the abolitionists increased down to the Civil

War. In the end their ideas won out.¹

The question of division is one of importance. It has been indicated that with few exceptions, Disciple historians have thought that no division occurred. They failed to consider what the abolitionists thought they were doing, or to evaluate the results and meaning of the organization of the Christian Missionary Society. Hartzel and others believed they were organizing a separate movement and were dividing from the older organization. They considered that division had already occurred, since many churches would not fellowship with slaveholders. Theologically the abolitionists and the rest of the brotherhood had been divided for a long time. The new missionary society only gave public recognition to this fact.

When the structure of the Disciples and that of the Baptists, in this period, are compared, they are found to be basically the same. The missionary society was the major cooperative venture supported by the denomination, and it provided the denominational organization. The division which occurred among the Baptists, while sectional, was a division over the missionary society's refusal to send a slaveholder as a missionary. The Baptists of the South withdrew their support from the missionary society and organized their own. With this event the Baptists were

¹ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., Quest for a Christian America, (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 133, 137.

considered to have divided. However, it is often overlooked that several societies still were supported by Baptists North and South for many years following the Civil War.²

Since the Disciples had the same form of organization, division must be recognized to have occurred when one group withdrew its support of the over-all denominational society and organized its own. This division was different from that of the Baptists in that it was of a group in the North and not a sectional division. This is one reason this division could be healed without difficulty, and when the abolitionists thought the rest had recognized they had been right, it was. This came about when the denominational society voted to support the war in 1863. The reunion was also aided by political events. The moderates' resistance was broken down by the events and issues of the war. This allowed the radical abolitionists to maintain their view in the reunion.³

The Disciples were, then, not unique and immune to the discords which plagued other denominations. The abolitionists were present and growing. Their influence was more extensive than has been recognized in the past. And they did suffer division over slavery.

² The publication society received Southern support for many years following the war.

³ Harrell, op. cit., 137.

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